13580

TO

M. YOUNG ESQUIRE,

I. C. S.

THIS SECOND EDITION OF THE ENGLISH VERSION OF THE

LEGEND OF SRIRANGAM

IS,

BY PERMISSION,

MOST RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

BY

THE AUTHOR.

MAHAMAHOPADHYAYA DR. U.V. SWAMINATHA IYER LIBRARY TIRUVANMIYUR MADRAS

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

The first edition of the 'Legend of Srirangam' was published more than 20 years ago. The little work was very favorably received, and at the solicitation and advice of friends we have now brought out a second and improved edition, which, it is to be hoped, will find favor with readers, both European and Native. Of course great changes have taken place in Srirangam during those years, and it is a pleasure to note that all these changes have been in the line of Progress. Mr. F. R. Hemingway I. C. S. last year brought out Vol. I of the *Madras District Gazetteer* relating to the Trichinopoly District. This work is admirable and does infinite credit to the learned labor bestowed on it by the author. According to Mr. Hemingway, Srirangam, including Jembukesvaram or Tiruvanakovil, has a population of 23,039, having doubled itself within the past 30 years. As should be expected the Vaishnuvite sect forms the major portion. Srirangam has grown considerably in importance, having a Sub-Registrar's Office, a popular Hospital, 4 Secondary Schools, 1 Upper Secondary School, 4 Vedic Schools, 6 Private Choultries, a Police Station, and a Bench Court. The Srirangam Dis-

trict Munsiff's Court is not located in Srirangam but in the compound of the District Court. It is so called to distinguish it from the Cusbah or Trichinopoly District Munsiff's Court—all territory in the Trichinopoly Taluq, South of the Coleroon bridge, forming the jurisdiction of the latter Court, and that to the North belonging to the Srirangam Court. Referring to the Srirangam Hospital, we are told that accommodation in it is now available for 24 beds,—12 males and 12 females. The institution has a rather interesting history. Surgeon-General Balfour was the first to conceive the idea of an Hospital for Srirangam. It was soon ushered into existence, and though the resources for its maintenance etc., were for sometime not very encouraging,—the Temple Trustees mainly supporting it by annual subscription,—yet the Srirangam Municipality and the Trichinopoly District Board very properly came forward with subscriptions, the former giving Rs 1200 annually, and the latter Rs. 1500. The Local Government also very benevolently helped with necessary surgical instruments and a six-month's supply of medicines. But the Hospital, which was inside the temple walls all this time, had to be removed; and as a new building outside the walls was erected and opened for In-patients in 1874, the Princess of Tanjore very

kindly presented the Institution with 2000 Rs. which was spent on an additional Ward. But unfortunately—or perhaps fortunately—the building was accidentally destroyed by fire in 1884, when Sir S. Ramaswami Mudelliar K, T. C. I, E generously came forward with 13,000 Rs, which helped towards restoring and improving the building, and ever since this Hospital has been doing very good and laudable work. Elephantiasis and Cholera used to make their appearance here; but it is remarkable that they are not in evidence of late years; perhaps owing to the improvement of the Water-supply of the town. In fact since 1899, except 1903, Srirangam has been free of the Cholera epidemic, during even the Yekadasi festival, an account of which is given in the Appendix to the present edition of our Legend. But notwithstanding the progress of Srirangam in other respects, the faction animosity between the Tenkalais and Vadagalais now and again breaks out afresh, when disputes are fomented regarding rituals; and temple-fed servants and nondescript folk appear on the scene as parties or witnesses, to the great annoyance and embarrassment of the local Magistracy. Although the Tenkâlai and Vadagalai controversy was years ago determined by local courts, and the Madras High Court and Privy Council declared Srirangam to

be a Tenkalai shrine, and that the Tenkalai ritual had the prior right of performance, yet it unfortunately happens that not only among these sectarians, but also between the *right-hand* and *left-hand* factions of Sudras, molehills and trivial disputes are magnified into mountains and serious riots follow. One great improvement has been introduced in the administration of the isle, and that is the great cattle fair, that used to be held at Srirangam some years ago, was stopped, we believe owing to a great destruction of valuable cattle by Cauveri floods. The fair is now held at Samyapuram annually. In 1903, according to Mr Hemingway, a great flood swept over Srirangam when "2 or 3 old breaches opened on the right bank of the Cauveri and on the left of the Coleroon". On this occassion, we are told, that villages were submerged, many houses destroyed, and crops perished to a considerable extent.

2. The following excerpt from Mr. Hemingway's book may not be out of place here:—"The Srirangam Temple comprises the largest area in Southern India, consisting of seven square enclosures, the wall of the outermost measuring 3072 by 2521 feet. Its general effect is greatly marred by the facts, that seven enclosures decrease in size and beauty the nearer one gets

to the centre, that the central shrine in the innermost enclosure is the insignificant part of the whole, being scarcely distinguishable (except by its guilded dome) from an ordinary village temple. Entering the magnificient Southern gateway in the outermost enclosure, the visitor is increasingly disappointed instead of being increasingly impressed, the nearer he draws to the Holy of Holies".

3. We need hardly refer here to the developments in Srirangam of trade and industrial pursuits. But a sure indication of the fact is seen in the opening of a new Railway Station (named the Srirangam station) 2 miles west of the Trichinopoly Fort station in 1906. The revenues of this station, as well the prospect of increase in the future, are very satistactory; and we have no doubt that ere long the temporary station will give place to a permanent one. The new Railway girder bridge and the new D. P. W. bridge, parallel to it, are fine specimens of workmanship and careful engineering. The scenery around the station with the near view of the Cauveri is indeed rather picturesque in appearance.

4. Perhaps we cannot better conclude this Preface to the second edition of our legend than by referring

to the very creditable manner in which the system of Self-Government is being maintained by the Srirangam Municipal Chairman and members of the Council. The Council exercises the privilege of electing its own Chairman, and it is composed at present of the following 15 members:— M. R. Ry. A. V. Gopalachariar M. A. B. L. elected Chairman; S. M. V. Oosman Sahib Bahadur B. A. B. L, Divisional Officer; M. R. Ry. S. M. Rajaram Rao Garu, nominated official member. The nominated non-officials are M. R. Ry. C. Ponnusami Pillay Avl., and M. R. Ry. M. S. Raghunatha Tata Chariar Avl. The elected Councillors are M. R. Ry. M. Appathorai Aiyar Avl., R. Nagaraja Row Avl., S. Venkatesa Aiyangar Avl,, S. Kuppusamy Aiyangar Avl., K. M. Kannusamy Pillay Avl., S. Krishnasami Aiyangar Srinivasa Aiyangar Avl., Gopalaannaiyangar Sarangapani Aiyangar Avl, B. A. S. R. Rangasamy Aiyangar Avl, B. A. B. L. S. K. Mathurbutham Aiyar Avl., M. K. Satagopa Aiyangar Avl., and P. K. Srinivasa Raghava Aiyangar Avl.

TRICHINOPOLY,
December 1908.

G. A. SALISBURY.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

To our readers in Southern India, both European and Native, we think an apology is scarcely needed for introducing to them, in its present form, the Legend of one of the most celebrated Hindu shrines in India. Srirangam has been a noted place from earliest times. Its situation at the confluence of the Kávéri and Coleroon invests it with preculiar sanctity in the estimation of the pious Hindu; and though the destinies of the old Pandian and Chola dynasties have become things of the distant past, the famous Shrine of Sri-Ranganáda still rears its sacred dome with unabated sanctity and interest.

2. To the faithful Hindu, of course, a visit to the *Vímána* or shrine of Sri-Ranganada, with ablutions in the sacred Kávéri, especially at particular seasons, secures a beatitude scarcely describable by mortal lips. To the enthusiastic Vaishnuvite, in particular, the holy Islet is a source of ecstatic delight. It was here that Ramanuja Chariar, the Vaishnuvite reformer and teacher, drew his early inspiration. It was here that the literary genius and the religious aspirations of the great man were cradled.

3. To the European tourist, Srirangam is full of historical importance and interest. When British power in India, during its infancy, was struggling for supremacy in the south of the Peninsula, the temple of Srirangam, we are told, was made an entrenched camp for the combined troops of Chanda Sahib and the French. Not unlike the walls of ancient Troy, that defied the martial efforts of the Spartan host in Honer's Iliad, the Temple of Srirangam was looked upon at that time as an impregnable stronghold. But British pluck and British powder were rather convincing arguments to the contrary. We dare say that great was the surprise of the unsophisticated natives, when young Clive succeeded in dislodging the French, and when, to use the words of the Editor of a recent edition of *Moor's Hindu Pantheon*, "British cannon discharged its hail within the sacred enclosures of this shrine of Vishnu."

4. To the Antiquarian and Orientalist the Temple at Srirangam is pregnant with archæological and literary interest Concerning the age of Sri-Rangam or of the *Stalla-Purana*,-- its local legand,— we cannot speak with anything like certainty. But at the same time, there can be little doubt that both are very

ancient. Meadows Taylor, in his very valuable history of India, says:— "The existence of Rama has been questioned by many; but his name appears as a King of Oudh in the most authentic of Hindu genealogies, and his place in them gives him a date of about 2,000 B. C." According to the *Stalla-purana*, Rama was contemporary with Vibishana, brother of the King of Ceylon, whom the former vanquished after a great deal of trouble. This Vibishana, to follow the Puranic record, conveyed the Shrine of Sri-Ranganada from Oudh and left it on the holy Isle, since known as Sri-Rangam. If these events can at all be regarded as facts, then the inner portion of the Srirangam Temple is at least 3,800 years old. The temple at Srirangam is said to have been built by a Chola sovereign; and though we have not been able to ascertain the date when the Chola dynasty was established, yet we come to the year 350 B. C. when the Chola family is said to have merged into the Pandian by marriage * It seems probable, to say the least, that the Temple of Sri-Rangam was built by the ancient Chola sovereign be-

* The inscription in the buildings go back to the reign of the Chola King Paranataka (1906—46) several of them are of historical interest, among these being some of the Pandya, Hoysala, and Vijyanagar dynasties. (vol I, Madras Districts Gazetteer.)

fore the invasion of India by the Greeks under Alexander the Great 327 B. C. The style of architecture, the specimens of ancient art in the temple, etc., are matters that favor such a view. To come to the Christian era, the earliest date connected with the history of Srirangam is A. D. 1072. In A. D. 1622, *i, e.* a little over 250 years ago, Trimal Naick of Madura repaired the temple. Those who have seen the Srirangam temple with its great stone-walls, its massive stone-pillars, and its antiquated dome, can easily imagine how long before this the temple must have stood in order to have been in need of these repairs,

5. The *Stalla - Puran* of Srirangam may not be perfect as a work of Art. But, in deciding that point, we should bear in mind that we are apt to judge of its merits according to our modern English ideas as to how a Romance should be written. We consider the legend of Srirangam a gem of ancient Hindu Literature; and we have treated it as being more a specimen of such literature than an *exposè* of Hinduism subsequent to the purity of Vedic times. Our present work does not pretend to be a faithful translation of the *Stalla-purana.* This purana has been translated from

the original Sanskrit into Tamil, and it is to this tamil version of the legend that we are indebted for our information. But we have condensed where it was found necessary, and we have elucidated where elucidation seemed indispensable. We trust that, in our endeavor to help our English readers to share in some of these literary "spoils of the gorgeous East," the integrity of our purpose will not be called in question by the fact of our having represented the creation and feeling of the Orient through the vehicle of Occidental thought and sentiment. *A propos*, not long ago, a very gifted lady, residing at Trichinopoly, paid a visit to the Temple at Srirangam for the purpose of inspecting its jewels. On her return we asked her what she thought of them. And this was what she said :—"Well, they may be costly, and good specimens of ancient Indian manufacture; but one can scarcely imagine, without being told it, that these jewels are worth the money said to have been laid out on them. They are so full of dust and rubbish that they would be all the better for a short visit to Bond Street."

TRICHINOPOLY,
November 1886.

G. A. S.

Book 1.

THE ARGUMENT.

Enthroned on Mount Kailasa, Siva is surrounded by celestial attendants. The sage *Narathar* appears and sues for information concerning the glorious origin of Sri-Rangam, its sacred river the Kaveri, &c.—Siva describes the situation of the fane and the peculiar blessings and privileges attending those who worship there or do religious honors to the presiding deity. Owing to the sanctity of the place the infernal regions are denuded of their inhabitants. The blessings that are showered on those who read, write or hear the sacred legend of Srirangam—Narathar is enraptured at the recital of Siva. 1

Resplendent from *Kailasa's*(*a*) sacred height,
The precious gems gleamed with bright mystic light;
And on its top there sate the three-eyed lord,—
Creator, saviour, fell-destroying god!
'Tis he whose *sakti*(*b*) nestles by his side,
Whose throat is azure by rank poison dyed,
Whose passion *Kama*(*c*) vainly tried to move
By means of swift-winged dart, the arm of Love;
But, scorning love, *Mahesa's* flaming fire
Consumed the Archer in his dreadful ire!

(*a*) Siva's terrestrial paradise. Every splinter of this mountain is said to be a precious gem.
(*b*) The consorts of the gods are called *saktas*.
(*c*) The Indian Cupid.

 13580

'Tis he,.of whom the sacred Muse of old
Did sing, and how he slew *Tarika* bold ;—
This demon's penance and his life austere
Both gods and wond'ring men had filled with fear.
    Thus sate great Siva on the mountain side,
Clad in love tokens of a Rishi's(*d*) bride,—
Spoils won when Rishis(*e*) in their jealous fit
Had planned his ruin in their secret pit!
And round Kailasa's lord a sacred throng
Encircling sit, who to his court belong.
There *Nandi*, watchful at his post he stands,
'Midst mighty *munis* and midst minstrel bands;
With hurried steps famed *Narathar*(*f*) appears,
With suppliant looks and reverential fears.
And as the S artan bands the Pylian sage
Respected for his wisdom aud his age,
So in that sacred throng dread silence reigns,
And Siva, bending with attention, deigns
To great the *muni*, as he humbly stood

(*d*) Siva, it is said, made love to the wives of the *rishis* in the forest Taruka, and for their inconstancy *mesdames les Rishis* were banished.

(*e*) It is not easy to define a *rishi*; it seems synonymous with *muni*, and the word may be taken to mean a deified sage or saint.

(*f*) The chief of the *rishis*.

And made obeisance, as a muni should.
"Oh! Swami! lord!" Thus sued the sage divine,
"A happy life, a happy fate is mine;
'Twas in mine ear in accents sweet was pour'd
The lore divine; and from thy boundless hoard
Of thought and knowledge was to me revealed,
What to the world beside was closely sealed;
Of things on earth, above, below; of gods,
Their fanes and blest retreats; of earthly lords,
And far-famed regions, where their royal sway,
'Neath Time's destroying hand, had roll'd away;
Of holy men, and sacred mount and stream—
The pilgrim's beacon and the poet's dream!
And how divinely formed, with matchless grace,
Kaveri flow'd to bless the human race;
For it surrounds *Sri-Ranga's* sacred shrine,
So lov'd by gods and graced by sprites divine!
But oh! blest *murti!* how I thirst and burn,
The story of that sacred place to learn;
How can I dare that burning thirst to slake?
Of yore thou saidst, the thousand-headed snake, (*g*)
With all his tongues, attempted he to trace

(*g*) The god *Athiseshan*, who has a thousand heads or hoods and 2,000 tongues.

The beauty, fame and annals of the place,
Vain would he strive; and ah! forsooth the task,
Too much for thee, is more than I should ask.
Yet would I supplicate, nor ask in vain,
That from thy lips divine I now may gain
The stroy, brief at least, of that fair place—
That shrine which *Vishnu* ever loves to grace."
Thus Narathar.
And Máhádéva (*h*) smiled
His smile divine, with satisfaction mild.
"Oh! truly said," Kailása's lord replied,
"In vain to me no devotee has cried;
Tho' far beyond my pow'r may be the task,
I grant the boon——the *little* that you ask.
Ten thousand summers (*i*) of the gods shall flow,
Ere you that story whole can hear or know:—
Attend, oh! muni! whilst I part reveal,
Let not dull care along your senses steal.
" Begirt by Kávéri's bright sacred stream,
Where bliss abounds and holiness doth gleam
With ray refulgent, stands the holy fane

(*h*) One of Siva's numerous appellations.

(*i*) A remarkable instance of hyperbole, we presume, among the gods. The tendency in this country to exaggerate may therefore be excused.

In that fair realm where Chola sovereigns reign.
Sri-Ranga named that fane, to gods so dear,
None seeks in vain; nor Hell nor Death, nor fear
Of pains in future births, dare overtake
The souls that to Sri-Ranga's shrine betake.
That shrine to view, its gracious lord adore,
The river-bath, alms from one s teeming store
To men—who long to tread the sacred soil,
Resigning earthly bliss, each care and toil,—
By Wisdom can such acts neglected be?
Their merits only Folly dare not see!
Hence sickness, pain and every earthly woe,
And unknown torture in the world below,
Cannot disturb the man who, good and true,
Sri-Ranganada's form in mental view
Retaining, once that sacred name repeats,
And its glad sound with ready welcome greets.
But twice repeated does the blessed name,
From sin's polluting stream and dreaded shame,
Release the soul; nor time, nor birth nor age
Its blessing can restrain, its merits gauge!
Blest is that happy man who for it yearns,
To Ranga's holy shrine who ever turns,
And Ranga's name repeats with folded hands,

When wand'ring far away o'er distant lands.
By whom then may those blessings be exprest
That will for ever on the faithful rest,
Who in Sri-Ranga's sacred waters(*j*) lave,
With *mantras* and with rites profound and grave!*

* * * *

And once the vaults of Hell were clearing fast;
His subjects lost, dread *Yama*(*k*) look'd aghast;
Patala(*l*) now a hidious void appeared,
His occupation gone, the worst he feared.
His loss, his fate the king infernal moaned
Alone in Hell, and thus the cause he owned:—
'The wish alone to visit Ranga's shrine
Transports all mortals to the realms divine
In *Swerga*,(*m*) where the gods reward the blest,
And toil and pain there end in ceaseless rest!
Ah! such the fame and grace of Renga's fane
That, hell deserted, I in vain complain!
E'en gods, enchanted by that sacred place,

(*j*) Reference is her made to the sacred little tank withim the temple walls at Srirangam known as *Santhirapushkarini*.

*We need not apologize, perhaps, for cutting short Siva's speech.

(*k*) The Indian Pluto.
(*l*) The infernal regions.
(*m*) The celestial paradise of India.

Their spheres desert to dwell with th' human race.
Such is the fashion at the present day,
And gods with mortal forms themselves array.
"Attend, oh! sage! The weary pilgrim fed,
When to Sri-Ranga's shrine he's haply led,
Can act so good by gods forgotten be?
Right meritorious is such charity!
While on the earth such donor shall be blest,
In *Voikonta*(*n*) eternal he shall rest;
But he who worships at Sri-Ranga's shrine,
At once obtains the bliss and grace divine
That gods on erring mortals e'er bestow,
For ceaseless alms to men devout below.
And on that sacred isle to give bright gold
As alms doth rarest charity unfold;
Tho' 'tis as well to give to Brahmans there,
Some land, or raiment, or a cow so fair! (*o*)
The gods on him far richer blessings pour,
Who, from Kávéri's sacred liquid store,
Some portion gives to my adorers there,
Who to Sri-Ranga's holy shrine repair.

(*n*) Vishnu's Heaven.

(*o*) This probably accounts for the fact that almost every species of property in Srirangam is owned by the twice-born race.

 13580

The sacred *thirtham* or that river bright (*p*)
No pious mortal fails to keep in sight,
Tho' in the midst of other streams will he
On Runga's treasures(*q*) meditative be!
When mortal breasts perplexity confest,
Thus *Perumal*(*r*) with instruction mortals blest:—
'My names repeating, utter the sweet prayer,
And make this river-bath your special care;
The dreaded main of future births passed o'er,
You'll reach *Voikonta's* bliss abounding shore.
But *Naraga* (*s*) awaits the wretch accurst,
Who scorns my name or fails in me to trust.'
" List then, oh! sage divine! the brightest gem
Is Vishnu in the godly diadem;
Of all the streams the chief is Kávéri;
Of *Vaishnabuktas* thou must ever be;
Of prayers has that soft mystic *mantra*(*t*) been;
Of sacred places sure is Ranga's queen(*u*)!
Thus fair Sri-Ranga is the blest abode,

(*p*) Reference is here made to the river Kaveri and the tank Santhirapushkarini.
(*q*) The Kaveri and the sacred tank.
(*r*) One of Vishnu's appellations.
(*s*) Hell.
(*t*) The incantation known as the *pranava mantra.*
(*u*) Srirangam is here personified.

Where sinful men are freed from all their load;
To Ranga's shrine the wise will ever lead
Those scornful men who his salvation need.
While those who faithful heed these blessed truths,
And breathe the prayer(*v*) that strengthens and that soothes,
At once, absolved from sins unknown and known,
Sri-Ranga's sovereign power they gladly own.
And blest are they who faithfully indite
Such precious truths revealed; they who recite
Sri-Ranga's glories, and who trusting heed
The story, see at once their happy meed—
On earth success, and god's unerring care,
In *Sri-Voikonta* bliss beyond compare."
And as the story Siva did relate,
The Sage stood mute, struck with amazement great!

(*v*) The *Ashtatchera mantra* or eight-lettered incantation.

Book 11. 13580

THE ARGUMENT.

The Sage Narathar on Kailasa entreats for further information concerning Sri-Rangam—Siva coutinues the narrative—The universe a void. Narrain or Vishnu slumbers on the vat or Banian leaf—the lotus grows from his navel, and Brahma issues therefrom—The awful ioterview between Hari and the newly created Brahma—Perumal's injunction concerning the one-syllable mantra or incantation—Brahma by penance and prayer creates the worlds, &c.—also the Vedas—The destructive demons who steal the Vedas from Brahma—Vishnu recovers the Vedas after destroying the demons—He restores them to Brahma and instructs him as to the use of the Vedas—This done, Vishnu returns to Voikonta. The narrative ceases and Narathar is enraptured.

His soul enraptured, yet with suppliant mien,
On blest Kailasa's top the sage is seen;
Prostrate before his lord awhile he lies
And him adoring thus he fervent cries:—
"Oh! Three-eyed One! benevolent and kind,
Thou source of light, enricher of the mind!
My breast with rapture and my soul with joy
Shall praise to thee eternally employ;
And fain would I invoke thy holy name,
And seek more knowledge of Sri-Ranga's fame.

Reveal oh! consort of a peerless queen(*a*)!
Say how the Idol and the shrine, now seen
In fair Sri-Ranga's fane, to mortal ken
So tangibly appeared, and also when!
Let not desire now hapless seek in vain
The story of the sacred tank(*b*) to gain."
The holy sage thus importuning stood,
With anxious gaze, in deep attentive mood.
Kailasa's lord implored in answer spake:—
"Oh sage! the boon is granted for thy sake;
As told of yore I can the tale recite,
Your earnest close attention I invite.
In days of old when Nature hid her face
In the Creator's bosom; and blank space
Succeeded to retreating Nature's place;
When, in obedience to his gracious laws,
Back flew Creation to the Primal Cause,
In darkness shrouded was the vast expanse,
No bounds to view, no object met the glance.(*c*)

(*a*) Siva's *sakti* or consort Parvati.

(*b*) The tank named *Santhirapushkirani*, already referred to in Book 1.

(*c*) I trust I have been successful in giving here substantially what is meant in the text. I found it very difficult to express intelligibly here what is so obscurely expressed in the vernacular.

Then *Narrain*(*d*) slumbered on his verdant bed,
With infant smiles, with guileless fancy led ;
Reposing thus upon the milky main,
The darling child an age complete had lain
In halcyon calm! But from that sleep profound
Awaking now, his vision met no bound.
The vasty deep, the gloom that length'ning grew
Forth from the infant mind sad wonder drew!
'Why thus alone? Can none,' he cries, 'explain?'
'Why thus alone!' is echoed back again.
By introspective search again he found,
Within his stomach all creation bound ;
And then his visage beamed with smiles divine.
For life and light both ever in him shine.—
When thus alone, and time so weary flew ;
A blossom from Sri-Vishnu's navel grew.(*e*)
Ah! primal flower! by men the *Kamla* named,
Above all other blossoms justly famed!
Its rosy petals vied with brightest gold,
Its stem shone, lit with costliest gems untold,
And from the floral product, pure and bright,

(*d*) Another name for Vishnu. He is popularly represented as sleeping on a vat or banian leaf ; he is thoroughly infantile and has one of his big toes in his mouth.

(*e*) This blossom was the padma or lotus.

Came *Brahma*,(*f*) chasing far the shades of night;
For he creation's first-born fitly called,
He *first* and *foremost* aptly is installed!
But solemn stillness reigned around him there;
Around he glanced with fear and dark despair.
Then as a staff when found by mortals blind,
As treasure, when the needy sudden find,
As panacea sweet to dying men,
So welcome was Sri-Perumal(*g*) to him then,
Disguised as Swan when he appeared to sight,
With *Meru's*(*h*) splendour and with *Surya's*(*i*) light!
'And who art thou, thou form so fair?(*j*)' said he;
Said Perumal softly, 'I'm the lord HARI!'
And thereon Brahma, filled with new delight,
Low prostrate falls before the swan so bright,
And thus invokes:—'Ah! Swami, gracious lord!

(*f*) Compare Sir W. Jones's spirited lines as follow:—
"Hail primal blossom! hail empyreal gem!
Kameel or *Pedma* or whatee'r high name
Delight thee; say what four formed godhead came
With graceful stole, and beaming diadem,
Forth from thy verdant stem?
Full-gifted Brahma!

(*g*) Vishnu is known in the South by this name.

(*h*) The Indian Olympus.

(*i*) The Sun, deified

(*j*) Vishnu and Brama appear to have employed cabalistic expressions here when addressing each other.

Instruct, command, obedience to thy word
Fit service is.' The *primal mantra*(*k*) sweet
Almighty Hari bids him e'er repeat;
And then on golden wings so swift he flies,
From Brahma's ken he mounts up to the skies!
That incantation brief doth Brahma swell
To O'M-*Hari*,—sound mystic that repel
All evil; and to pious Brahmins e'er
The sweetest, foremost is this primal pray'r!
Who Eastward turns, repeating Hari's name,
Is ever free from sin's alloy and shame.
A thousand years, with prayful penance deep,
His vigil doth the gifted Brahma keep;
And then appeared a ray of Vedic light, (*l*)
That lay obscured before in shades of night.
'Neath ray so pure and with oblations rare,
The four-faced one Creation makes his care;
Bu-logam(*m*) and bright spirit-land(*n*) appear;

13580

(*k*) The incantation that is always used with solemn reverence and known as the one-syllable *mantra*. It is simply the syllable *O.' M.*

(*l*) Reference is here made to the formation of the *Gayatri* "or holiest verse of the Vedas" by the efficacy of Brahma's four oblations and his *mantras*. According to Sir W. Jones the *Gayatri* is the mother of the Vedas.

(*m*) The earth.

(*n*) I mean *deva logam*!

The Priest the Warrior, Trader, Labourer hear
The music of his voice, and Moon and Sun
At his command their ceaseless journeys run.
And *devas* bright, with incantations new,
Forth by his active energy he drew;
And 'midst all other work the *Vedas* four,
With toil produced, enriched his labours' store!

But list! oh sage! in darksome, evil hour
From Brahma's ears, with strange malignant power,
Two Demons sprang;—then fled the joys of light!
Destruction swift they spread, and gloomy night
Flung murky shadows o'er Creation's face,
And in each sphere confusion grew apace.
Then gloating o'er destruction, lack a-day!
The Demons stole the Vedas, and away
They sped, and hid them 'neath the boundless main;
The Vedas lost, them Brahma sought in vain!
Aloud he wept, and mourned his hapless fate,
Alone dejected on the main he sate.
But all-seeing Narrain spied the daring theft,
And Brahma too of Vedas thus bereft.—
Disguised as fish the deity appears,
And comforts Brahma as he wipes his tears :—
'My first-born thou, let fear and sorrow cease,
I'll soon restore the Vedas and thy peace.'

With seething rage then Narrain, swift as light,
With th' culprit Demons 'gan the anxious fight;
And soon the combat o'er, the warrior great
Returns in triumph, and with joy elate,
Restores the Vedas to his anxious child,
Who, filled with rapt'rous joy, looked up and smiled.'
With blessings and instruction's guiding light,
As tride his *vahan*(*o*) Vishnu took his flight
To Voikonta's eternal blissful shore,
Where *Lakshmi's*(*p*) smiles fresh draughts of pleasure [pour(*q*)—
As when on troubled seas some men are toss'd,
When Siva ceased, the sage in bliss was lost!

(*o*) Each of the Hindu deities has a steed or *vahan*. Brahma's *vahan* is a swan or goose. Siva mounts a bull known as *Nandi*, and Vishnu's vehicle is the *garuda* or eagle.

(*p*) Vishnu's lovely consort.

(*q*) The legend on hand is purely sectarian; its thoughts and doctrines no doubt lean to Vaishnavite teaching. It is therefore not surprising that, in reciting the story of Sri-Ranga, Siva should be discursive here. The sectarian motive is apparently to shew that Vishnu is the Almighty Hari, and that Brahma was only a creative energy proceeding from the self-existent *Narraîn* or Vishnu. Not to tire my English readers I have taken the liberty of abridging the narrative here a good deal, and I have advisedly omitted details of the creation of the worlds, &c.

Book III.

THE ARGUMENT.

On Kailasa Siva continues the narrative—Brahma does penance and recreates the world—He consults the stars and seeks Vishnu's aid on the shore of the milky ocean—Vishnu appears in the form of a tortoise and bids him repeat continuously the *paranava* and *ashtatchira mantras*—Brahma does penance again, and a Shrine arises from the ocean where Vishnu lay—The grandeur and pageant that attend the shrine during its aerial journey—It alights on the shore where Brahma is doing penance. Brahma is enraptured—Interior of the shrine—Brahma prostrates himself and profoundly adores Sri-Ranga as he lay visibly in the shrine. The scene is principally confined to the shore of the milky ocean,

Aloft the sage his Lord again entreats,
And Mahadeva further thus repeats
The thrilling story of Sri-Ranga's fane,
Where bliss immortal mortals e'er attain :—
"With holy precepts thus was Brahma blest,
And in accord with Vishnu's great behest,
With vigil and long penance deep, austere,
Almighty Hari did his son revere :
And from such rare devoted toil there grew
Fresh wonders ; fast arose bright worlds anew ;
The universe with grateful praise resounds,
With gifted Brahma's name each sphere rebounds !

But gazing on yon astral portents bright,(*a*)
The pensive Brahma reads their boding light;
He scans the mystic page and starts with fear;
There *Indra's*(*b*) sway and fame so brief appear,
The varied fates of gods, and men below,
And his own end that page doth darkly shew!
To clear these clouds of doubt and fear that rose,
Now Brahma to the milky ocean goes;
And, near the bosom of the main so white,
With prayerfull penance seeks more guiding light.
Such labour claims Sri-Narrain's special care,
And soon to Brahma's side he doth repair
In form disguised. Adoring Brahma cries :—
'Oh swami! grant that I may realize,
In native form unveiled, thy presence bright,
And with the happy vision bless my sight.'
He ending, now Sri-Vishnu thus replies :—

(*a*) Brahma studies Astronomy. It is well known that from earliest times the Hindus were remarkable for their study and knowledge of Astrology.

(*b*) Indra is said to be the God of the firmament; and, according to *Moor*, he is the *Jupiter Pluvius* of the Hindu Pantheon. His comparatively transient career, as hinted in our legend, is purely a Puranic idea. In the Vedic period, according to a Europen writer, "he was invested with the highest attributes"

'In vain, with anxious throbbing heart, he tries,
Who seeks my form divine unveiled to see,
However puissant such one may be!
Unnumber'd words arise at my command,
Didst thou my vast creative power withstand?
Thy thought is rash; tho' faithful hearts are blest
Who seek my face that fervently have prest.
To bless the faithful oft do I appear
In baser forms arrayed,(*c*) that I each fear
Might still, and guide aright their fragile barque,
Borne on life's ocean, 'midst its tempests dark.
As fish by glance, and tortoise by desire,
With mere embrace the *Sarabam* (*d*) so dire,
Their young beget,(*e*) and with parental pride
Their brood they nurse, when wand'ring from their side

(*c*) Reference is here made to Vishnu's several *avataras* or incarnations.

(*d*) The *Sarabam* is a fabulous bird; and, according to the Hundu ided of the subject, it is so powerful that it can destroy the lion with the greatest ease.

(*e*) This seems to be rather an extravagant idea of the early Hundu poets. Compare the saying so popular among Tamulians, ஆமை கிணற்றில் அணில கொம்பில் The meaning of the proverb is that the chirping of the squirrel on the branch of a tree impregnates the tortoise though at the bottom of a well.

Thus made the object of my special care,
Thus did thy god head I so tender rear;
With holy precepts and with Vedic light,
Thy nascent mind I sought to guide aright;
But now alas! so prurient thou wouldst see
My ambient glory that is hid from thee!
My Brahma! rest content, thy fears restrain;
If perfect life and light thou wouldst obtain,
Oh! make the *primal mantra*(*f*) thy great care,
Together with that other(*g*) magic prayer!'

And thus enjoining, Vishnu sped away
Across the main, and 'neath the warming ray
Of his instruction blest, the magic prayer
The gifted Brahma makes his constant care.
A vigil long again, with penance deep,
The holy Brahma doth devoted keep.
And from the lonely shore the god descries(*h*)

(*f*) As mentioned before in previous books the *primal* prayer or incantation is the *pranava mantra* or the monosyllabic O'M. It is really tri-literal, and the three letters composing the mystic incantation A U M; these three letters, we are told, were "milked out, as it were from the three *Vedas.*"

(*g*) The other incantation is the *ashtatchira mantra* or eight-lettered incantation. As enjoined by Vishnu in the legend, the coalition of the *pranava* with the *ashtatchera mantra* would run thus,—O'*M Sri-man-Narrainan.*

(*h*) The reader should bear in mind that Brahma all this while does penance on the shore of the great milky ocean where Vishnu lies as Narrain.

A shrine so glorious from the main arise:
Awhile he gazes on the wondrous sight,
Amazed, his eyes are dazzled with its light!
'Tis Ranga's Shrine that onward to the shore
The alwar *Garuda*(*i*) now proudly bore.
With golden verge a hearld strides before
And num'rous *devas* bright and sprites divine,
In pageant crowd, surround the moving shrine,
(Thou Sage! with rishis famed didst swell the throng,
And Hari's praises loud proclaim in song.
From *gandarvas*(*j*) are heared soft, holy strains,
And o'er the shrine sweet blossoms Indra rains.
Sri-Ranga tama comes, the horns proclaim,
And *deva dundimis* (*k*) dance to his name!
The earth is rent, amid the deaf'ning cheers,
As Ranga's shrine upon that shore appears.
Within that shrine *Ananta* (*l*) canopies
Almighty Ranga, who quiescent lies

(*i*) Vishnu's *vahan* or vehicle, is the eagle.

(*j*) *Gandorvas* are the celestial choristers.

(*k*) The *deva dundimis* are the celestial *ballette* dancers.

(*l*) *Ananta* is one of the names of the mythological thousand headed snake of the Hindus. His thousand heads form a canopy over Vishnu's head as he lies upon the serpent, as shewn in the legend, and as may be seen in the sacred Shrine of Sri-Ranganada at Srirangam.

In bliss upon his wondrous serpent-bed,
With his right hand beneath his sacred head.
  Brahma, enraptured with the glorious sight,
Adoring falls before the shrine so bright —
In accents low a herald bids him see
How Ranga in that shrine so gloriously
Accepts his mantras and his penance rare,
Rewards his toil and soul-oppressing care!
Ambrosial words! like music to the ear,
Them heeding, Brahma quits all doubt and fear;
And as the sacred Shrine he penetrates,
Before great Hari he himself prostrates;
Then flashing, in amazing strnge array,
Appeared all worlds and sprites as bright as day.
Beside Srí-Ranga is his lovely queen;
Above. the skies; below, the earth is seen;
And *Ganapaty(m)* near Sri-Vishnu's head

(*m*) Or Ganesa, is the reputed son of Siva, and is known as the God of prudence and policy, according to the writer in the "Hindu Pantheon." He is popularly represented with the head and trunk of the elephant.—Our reader should be able to recognize him when they see him, as they will along the roadside or under trees, where he is stationed, being on the look-out for a bride like his mother.

So gravely sits; *Durga* (*n*) iu solemn dread
Looks on; and *Saraswati*, (*o*) goddess bright,
With th' *gayatri* reflects resplendent light.
Above the Shrine four *calasams* (*p*) appear,—
Fit emblems of the Vedas you revere,—
And on their pointed peaks the sentient read
The *mantras* chief that faithful mortals need.
Amid such splendour and such glory bright,
Sri-Ranga's sacred form bursts on his sight,
As deck'd with gem and jewels, rich and rare,
He lay, with *vastram*(*q*) so divinely fair!
And spotless excellence his form reveals,

(*n*) *Durga* or *Kali* has been interpreted to mean the evil goddess. It wood apperr that she takes peculiar delight in bloody sacrifices. We quote the following from an editorial note in a recent edition of *Moor's Hindu Pantheon*:—' Under the name of Mari, Kali is invoked in Southern India as the goddess of small-pox: she inflicts it and she removes it. The name often appears in a compound form as Mariamman, Mariammei, Mariathal."

(*o*) Brahma's consort, the Indian Minerva; she is said to be the goddess of harmony and the Arts.

(*p*) A *calasam* is a pitcher; but what is meant here are the knobby or ball-shapped figures we see surmounting the tops of Hindu shrines and pagodas.

(*q*) Cloths.

 13580

His azure (*r*) beauty Brahma's senses steals.(*s*)
Before the awful presence Brahma falls,
Deep reverence his inmost soul enthralls."—

(*r*) Azure is Vishnu's colour.

(*s*) We have not been able to follow up the description given in our text of Vishnu's beauty. We think the English reader would scarcely find fault with us for this omission, when mention is made of a few of the objects to which the beautiful Sri Ranga is compared. His color is said to be as beautiful as the *Indra-nilam* (a flower.) His forehead is like the crescent moon; his thighs are like the stem of the plaintain tree; his nose like the gingelly (*Sesamum*) flower: the pupils of his eyes are black beetles intoxicated with honey; his mouth like the *Kova* fruit; his navel like the winding stream of the Ganges, &c.

Book IV.

THE ARGUMENT.

Brahma, still in the celestial Shrine, addresses Vishnu or Sri-Ranga, by his numerous appellations—The solemn invocation—Vishnu signifies his great pleasure at Brahma's pious fervor, and gives him *carte blanche* for any *varam* or boon he may desire—The scene is on the shore of the milky ocean,—the same as the preceding book.

From heights empyreal and with sacred fire,
Celestial Muse decend! These lips inspire
To sing the lay whose rare enchanting strains
Enlist the heart above all earth's refrains-
In measured strains the sacred song shall flow;
My growing page with wonders new shall glow.
Ecstatic visions bright-eyed Fancy bear
On golden wings, amid etherial air,
While *Brahmi*(*a*) flings a beamy, cheering ray,
To guide and warm us, 'cross our devious way!
Of her great Consort here we then shall sing,
And how with plaudits loud the shore did ring,
As Brahma stood enraptured in that Shrine,
Invoking Ranga by his names divine!

(*a*) Another name for *Saraswati* or the Hindu Menerva, the consort of Brahma. Being the goddess that presides over letters and arts, she might very properly be invoked by the poet.

Ganesa!(*b*) shall we mortals claim in vain
Inspiring light, to sing the heaven-born fane
That aptly bears Sri-Ranga's glorious name,
And doth from mortals highest rev'rence claim ?(*c*)
Amidst empyreal light while Ranga lies
In that immortal Shrine, in heavenly guise,
Him Brahma thus invokes by names divine :—
" Oh source of life and light! oh! parent mine!
Thou happy consort of a golddess bright!
Oh! guard and guide thy helpless child aright;
Prostrate for ever at Thy feet I'll lie,
A thousand *Yagas*(*d*) shall arise on high.

(*b*) Ganesa or Ganapaty has already been referred to .He, we are told, is invoked by the pious Hindu before attempting any work

(*c*) The reader will observe that in this book and subsequent books the narrative is proceeded with. without the intervention of either the sage Narathar or the divine narrator. The oriental mode of imparting instruction by dialogue is characteristic; but in continuing the narrative from the third book of the legend we find it more convenient to omit all reference to both the hearer of the narrative and the narrator. The first three books would suffice to shew that the story of Srirangam was not volunteered by the gods.

d) Peculiar sacrificial offerings. Brahma seems to have a genius for such exercises.

Sri-Ranganada! *Govinda*(*e*) dread lord'
Oh! Lokanada, awe-inspring god!
With thousand names, and hands, and heads and eyes,
At whose command unnumbered worlds arise;
Both flaming *Agni*(*e*) and fair *Indra*(*f*) grace,
With glowing beauty, thy most sacred face;
And *Surya*(*g*) and fair *Chandra*'s(*h*) milder light
Dwell proudly in those eyes divinely bright;
Bu-logam peers forth from thy lotus-feet,
Thy navel is the world above I greet.
While towering far above the skies so blue
The blissful Swerga(*i*) in thy head I view;
From thee both Day and Night their courses take,
And at thy dread decree the Fates awake!
In mercy heed, oh! Narrain ever blest,
And grant thy humble suppliant's one request,—
Benignant from thy rest immortal rise,
In unveiled glory stand before mine eyes.

(*e*) The invocation in the text alludes to several of the thousand names by wich Vishnu is known. We have referred to as many as we could conveniently import into English verse.

(*e*) The god of fire.
(*f*) The god of the firmament.
(*g*) The sun
(*h*) The moon.
(*i*) Indra's heaven.

13580.

Oh! first and last Creation's source and end,
On thee both gods and mortals glad attend;
All science and bright knowledge from thee flow,
Omnipotent, thy will—for weal or woe—
Is done, nor can that will thy creatures know!
Namo, namo (*j*) with thankful heart I raise
Both holy chaunt and prayer to thee in praise!"
  And Brahma ceased, and on the seagirt shore
He silent stood, in silence to adore!
And Narrain, beaming with benignant grace,
Beheld with joy his tender offspring's face;
Then from his lips these words ambrosial flowed,
On Brahma thus a blessing he bestowed:—
  "Welcome, oh Brahma! pious toils like thine
As burning light before me constant shine;
Thy zeal devout I've made my highest care,
Accepted are thy praise and works so rare,
He who thus ritual honors to me pays,
Who pious fervour, pure and bright, displays,
Extolling Hari by his sacred names,
No boon from me in vain he ever claims!
In glory, swift descending from the skies,

(*j*) A pious ejaculation, meaning I worship, I worship.

My form unveiled will bliss his longing eyes.
And now in glorious guise my form beheld,
The happy meed of all thy work of old ;
Oh Brahma ! would'st thou other gifts obtain,
Name but the boon, nor shalt thou ask in vain !"

Book V.

THE ARGUMENT.

Brahma's supplication—Vishnu grants his petition—He enjoins Brahma to perform the "Vishnu poojah" and describes the situation and joys of Voikonta. Vishnu's ommiscience, omnipresence and omnipotence–The worship of Idols enjoined. The three classes of *stallams* or places sacred to Vishnu, and their respective excellence, sanctity and religious character. The superior sanctity of Srirangam and all tracts around it to the extent of two miles. How men differ from each other morally and spiritually by reason of birth. state or condition in life, personal religion and the study of the Vedas and Puranas.

" Oh *!* by the milky main, on its glad shore,
For ever in this Shrine may I adore
Thy form divine;"—Brahma responding sued—
" With holy zeal and constancy endued
To poojahs thrice-a-day may I attend,
And from the sacred strand for e'er ascend
Deep rites; a four-fold blessing(*a*) dost thou pour
On those who thee in this bright Shrine adore;
And when life's ev'ning o'er them spreads its shade,
The pains of Death may not their peace invade;

(*a*) In the legend the four-fold blessing includes piety, obedience to one's guru or priest, prosperity and longevity.

But may they, borne on pinions joyful, fleet,
Rest safe beneath the shadow of thy feet!"
  And oh! for Krishna's(*b*) tuneful, sacred lyre,
The heights of Góvardhána(*c*) that inspire
The child of song, to sing in fitting strains
The godly grace with which Sri-Ranga deigns
To gifted Brahma's ken thus to unfold
Empyreal treasures, erst in song untold!
  "In sweet contentment rest, Oh! Brahma rest;
For, ready yielding to thy fond request,
Henceforth from this my Shrine, with lustre bright,
Shall beam my godhead on thy longing sight;
And from this Shrine shall bliss immortal flow,
Here devotees nor fear nor shame shall know.
Five times a day if thou wouldst poojahs make,
Till summers ten-times ten their flight shall take;
If ritual honors thus to me ascend,
Voikonta's bliss shall Brahma e'er attend!
Nor can thy godly fancy strive to trace

(*b*) Krishna is held to be the Indian Apollo.

(*c*) A mythological mountain said to be equivalent to the Grecian Parnassus. On these heights Krishna, with his lyre and his nine *Gopias* or shepherd maids—conjectured to be the Muses of the Hindus—seems to have a happy time of it.

Ethereal charms that Sri-Voikonta grace.—
Above the azure vault that far surrounds 13580
The universe, beyond such airy bounds,
With liquid fire a river(*d*) runs it course;
('Twere vain for thee to trace its flaming source)
Beyond its waves, which terrors grim instil,
As greater heights one mounts, ascending still,
Upon thy wond'ring, wistful sight shall beam
Perennial *Vraja's* limpid, nymph-woo'd stream;
And yet beyond that river margin blest
Is Voikonta: in sempiternal rest
I there, in form you now behold, do dwell,
'Mid joys connubial that untiring swell!
  Aloft enthroned, almighty sway I wield;
To me all logas and bright systems yield
Obedience; all creation I pervade;(*è*)
Unseen my presence shines o'er hill and glade;

(*d*) In the Tamil version of our legend it is stated that beyond the universe is *Tisayanam*; what this means I cannot say. But the Hindu belief is, that beyond the universe is a river of fire, and good Hindus wade through it by the help of the Cow's tail! To secure such help a Hindu should propitiate the Cow.

(*e*) Is this an expression of the Pantheistic idea? The Christian believes in God's Oimniscience and Omnipresence. But pantheism is one thing and the Immanence of God quite another.

Omnipotent, I rule o'er sea and land,
And great or small confess my bounteous hand.
As oil contained within the *ses'mum* seed,
Thus in each mortal breast enshrined I read
Each wand'ring thought, and safely guide aright
In dwelling Conscience with unerring light!
And like the dew dispell'd by Surya's ray,
Thus do I chase night's gloomy shades away.
With love maternal in my hands I bear
The faithful objects of my godly care;
But ah! such wonders men and gods confound,
With faces veiled they're whelm'd with awe profound.
To still their fears I, with benignant grace,
Have thrice exposed to view my sacred face.
Upon the milky main, in Swerga bright,
In Surya's realm have I appear'd to sight;
And as Tirtaman have I since been known,
By that new name my mercy all shall own.
By num'rous avatars I've bless'd mankind;
In form as man or beast me oft men find;
I dwell in idols, tho,' to outward sight,
They seem but earth, or stone, or metal bright;(*e*)

(*e*) It has always been the boast of Vedantism or esoteric Hinduism, that idols are not looked upon by Hindus as gods, but that they exhibit "the rude elemental form" of worship, and are intended merely to impress on vulgar minds the attributes of *Brahm*, the one, self-existent and almighty Being. But this theory, we think, is more ingenious than ingenuous.

And those who dare my idols to despise,
Dread *Naraga's* vaults shall rend with hideous cries.
But happy he and all his offspring blest,
My presence in these idols who attest.
Hence seek my shrines, my idols e'er adore,
Tho' seen in desert wild or distant shore!
As fit abodes these idols me invite,
When raised by sacred art with solemn rite.(*f*)
All these created are; while Ranga's Shrine
And famed Srirangam's sod so fair, divine,
Are self-existent; they eternal beam,
With god-like beauty bright, and holy gleam.
  Beside that *stallam*,(*g*) so supremely fair,

(*f*) An idol as well as a temple, among the Hindus, is sculptured or constructed according to certain regulations prescribed in their *Sírpi Sastram* or science of Architecture. If such regulations are violated, or if the solemn rite of dedication and consecration by a Brahman priest is neglected, the idol or kovil becomes useless. The god refuses to dwell there. In the legend Vishnu gives details as to how his idols are to be constructed or formed. Some of the instructions are as follow :—The image must not be too big or too small ; it must neither look up to the skies nor look down on the earth ; there should not be a scowl but a smile in its face. &c.

(*g*) The word in its generic sense means a locality or place ; but it is sometimes used to denote a dignified or sanctified site,

Immortal, seven other regions bear(*h*)
My sacred honors and my names divine;
And there shall devas with deep rites combine
The praises of each appellation mine!
By devas and by rishes long ordained
Are other stallams that have honour gained,
Where I in shrine or idol constant dwell,
Where I from mortal breasts all fear dispel;
But' 'curst the sod, confusion fill the site
Where one in vain seeks for the cheering light
Of temple, gopra or a shrine of mine;
And bliss abound in regions that confine

(*h*) These seven stallams or places dedicated to Vishnu are Tirumushtam, Tripatee, Salagramaparuvatam, Naimesaraniam, Vanamalay, Pushkiratchetiram, Narayanasiramam. Most of these seem to be well known places of pilgrimage in South India. These stallams, according to the legend, are self-existing, while inferior to them are the stallams or localities dedicated or consecrated by the subordinate deities which from the second class, and by rishis, which form the third class of stallams. The legend further states that 100 miles around the first class (the 7 just mentioned) stallams around Srirangam constitute holy ground; next in the scale are the deva stallams, these include only seven miles around as holy ground. These stallams include such places as Conjeveram, Combaconum, Courtallam, Tinnevelly &c., while lower again in the scale is the rishi stallam, which takes in only a tract of one mile around as sanctified ground.

My holy stallams bright; these tracts around
Are allways reckon'd holy sacred ground.
There mortals live secure from sin and shame;
There men devout can good-like honors claim;
There poojahs made, with *salagrama*(*i*) pure,
Their higest meed my votaries secure;
Their dwelling houses solemn rev'rence claim,
For they and mighty HARI are the same!

Yet tracts two miles around Sri-Ranga's* sod
Claim special honors from its gracious lord;
There men, tho' *chandalars*(*j*)or culprits low,
The joys of Vishnu's paradise shall know!
The sacred cow, or horse or humble ass
To glory and distinction there shall pass;
And tho' one born a woman, (*k*) there shall she

(*i*) Peculiar stones found in the Ganges and held by Hindus to be very sacred.

* Our readers will remark Vishnu's anachronism here. At the time he was speaking Srirangam was in the womb of futurity. Perhaps he spoke in anticipation or prophetically!

(*j*) Outcastes or sinners.

(k) To be born a woman indicates punishment for some heinous offence committed in a former birth. The Hindu saying is:—"It is not easy to escape being born a woman." Is this Hindu chivalry? But "Touch not a woman in anger even with a blossom" is said to have been the sentiment expressed by the great Hindu lawgiver.

Recipient of immortal favours be;
Tho' void of virtue and each female grace,
Yet bless'd, that woman shall behold my face;
While woman's virtue and devotion there
My highest bliss and honors e'er shall share,
By mortals *devi*(*l*) named, she reaps her due—
Where e'er she treads Voikonta starts to view *!*(*m*)

* * * * *

Oh! holy Brahma*!* 'tis a privilege rare
To have one's birth in human form so fair,
But rarer still when one is born a man,
With wisdom's light my glorious works to scan,
Still higher surely in the scale is he,
A *Vaishnuvite* devout who haps to be.
He who, with poojahs and with mantras deep,
My sacred form in mental view doth keep,
Is for more blest, yet still he leads the van
The Vedas and Puranas who doth scan*!*
In fine, Oh Brahma*!* me must all revere,
As Rudra, Vishnu, Brahma I appear;
To save, destroy, create,—such pow'rs I own,
To thee all mystries deep thus have I shewn!"

(*l*) *Devi* means goddess.

(*m*) Here we have advisedly omitted a great deal of the legend as it refers only to ritualistic matters which will be wholly uninteresting to our English readers

Book VI.

THE ARGUMENT.

Brahma solicits further information concerning the Vishnu poojah. Perumal or Vishnu prescribes the ritual for such poojah, and enjoins its observance by Brahma and every devout Vishnu-vite. He gives Brahma a further insight into the superior sanctity of Srirangam; and then closing his lips Vishnu turns into an idol in the Shrine. After making poojahs to the idol for a long time Brahma carries the Shrine, with the idol in it, and places it on the bank of the stream Vraja. Here Brahma performs poojahs, and collects the devas, rishis, manus, etc. to see the idol, and to learn its history, as well as the mantras and the rites peculiar to the Vishnu poojah. The Shrine and idol are then given by Brahma to Surya who in his turn makes them over to the *manu* Vaivaswata. The *manu* entrusts the Shrine and idol to his son Ikshwaku with a solemn charge. The scene shifts from the milky ocean to the bank of the Vraja.

From Perumal when the words ambrosial flow'd,
With sunlit smiles his sacred visage glow'd;
And Brahma, with deep filial care opprest,
His sire divine with humble mien addrest:—
"Oh god of gods! Voikonta's joy and pride!
On me but dart one further ray to guide
Thy suppliant child, to know thy holy will;
That will to do my breast with ardor fill!

Oh! Varedarajah (*a*) benefactor kind!
Say, if to vigil and these rites resign'd,
This heart I close against all other care,
What rich reward can such lov'd labour bear?"
And Perumal thus replied:—"Oh Brahma! hear!
My poojahs rightly made(*b*) to me are dear;
But ere such rites divine you undertake,
Do not the *Pancha-ratram*(*c*) rules forsake;
Your guru seek and hour auspicious choose;
Throughout these rites devotion true infuse
By meditating on my names(*d*) divine;

(*a*) Vishnu is worshipped in his shrine at Conjeveram under this appellation.

(*b*) Great care is taken by Vishnu to give a complete ritual for the conduct of the Vishnu poojah. We have been more concerned for the narrative in the main than for these subordinate ritualistic formulæ in our present work; but we have at the same endeavored to give the English reader as much of Vishnu's instructions for his poojahs as we could conveniently have given.

(*c*) The *pancha-ratram* is said to be a Treatise prescribing the ceremonies, etc., necessary for the regular conduct of the Vishnu poojah.

(*d*) According to the stalla-purana twelve of Vishnu's sacred names should be repeated during poojahs, but what these names are we have been unable to ascertain.

Beware to keep a proper image(*e*) mine
To shed bright lustre on thy off'rings pure ;
And Brahmins learn'd, (*f*) no less than five secure
To help ; the pray'r, of letters eight, repeat,
And then your poojahs shall be quite complete ;
All they who thus to poojahs mine betake,
To bliss on bright Voikonta's shore shall wake !
Thus Brahmas nine to me these poojahs made ;
From Indra and the devas of all grade
To me such ritual honors e'er shall rise ;
Accurst is he who me such rites denies,
Despite such rites, the man is still accurst
Who in his guru's wisdom fails to trust(*g*),—
Loath'd by his kind, condemn'd, despised by all,
Immeasuarably low that one shall fall !

(*e*) According to the Hindu Sirpi-sastram an image or idol is properly made when it is constructed of 5 metals, viz., gold, silver, brass, copper and lead- Of course idols made entirely of wood or earth are allowed.

(*f*) No less than five Brahmins versed in the *pancha-ratram* can help on such occasions.

(*g*) The three cardinal virtues that seem to be emphasised in Hindu theology are reverence for one's guru or priest, filial affection and piety towards God.

In *moksha(h)* they shall sempiternal rest
Who trust in me, tho' sin defile the breast.
And mark'd is he among a num'rous train,
Unmeasur'd blessings shall that one obtain,
Who holds that I the universe pervade,
Who sees my godhead in each hill and glade.
While he who on my names shall meditate,
And say the mantra form'd of letters eight,
W ss endless in yon moksha shall obtain;
And he divine perfection too shall gain

(*h*) *Moksha* or *Motcham* is the heaven of heavens with the Hindus. It indicates the state in which the soul, liberated from the body, is perfectly free from transmigration.

* The reader need perhaps be told here that a kalpa is a mytho logical period of time, and it seems coeval with the age of Brahma. When Vishnu spoke on the present occasion nine ages had expired, and therefore nine Brahmas in succession had been created, and annihilated, so to speak. The birth or creation of each Brahma is the commencement of an age. Brahma lives for a period and then ceases to exist; *apres lui le deluge*! This deluge is thus quaintly described by *Sonnerat*:—"On the death of Brouma all the worlds will suffer a deluge; all the *Andons* be broken; and the *Cailosson* and the *Voikendon* will only remain. All that time *Vichenou*, taking a leaf of the tree called *Allemaron* will place himself on the leaf under the figure of a very little child, and thus float in the sea of milk, sucking the toe of his right foot. He will remain in this posture till *Brouma* anew comes forth from his navel in a tamarind (tamarai ?) flower. It is thus that the ages and worlds succeed each other and are perpetually renewed." The commencement of an age or a fresh creation of Brahma and the universe is described in Book II of our legend.

Who trust in me, altho' a Pariah born.
But all shall be out-caste, accurst, forlorn,
Who would my faithful Bhuktars(*i*) treat with [scorn!

The faithful, though they take the life so pure
Of cow, or child, or Brahmin(*j*) shall secure
Immunity; tho' in my rites they fail,
Yet when with praises loud my name thy hail,
Their excellence by men shall stand confest,
Their lives with fame immortal shall be blest!
Tho' mortal, of Srirangam he who thinks
But once, in Swerga bliss immortal drinks;
While he who speaks of its great sancitity
With scorn, shall lowest out-caste ever be!
Far better 'tis to dogs so vile to give,
As charity, a meal than to relieve
The out caste wretch—whose portion e'er is shame—
Whose tongue cannot pronounce that sacred name.
On earth below, or in the worlds above,
T'wards Ranga's Shrine, with folded hands in love,

(*i*) Bhuktars mean followers or devotees.

(*j*) The murder of a Brahmin, of a child or woman or cow, is considered by the Hindus to be some of the most heinous sins that a Hindu can commit. Menu, the great Hindu lawgiver, has prescribed the most awful modes of punishment for such offences.

Who turns, 'mong men a gem shall be confest,
Be he a mortal or a spirit blest!
And now Oh! Brahma! with deep faith and fear
My sacred poojahs dost thou e'er revere;
And holy *tirtam*(*k*) with sweet incense bear
With other off'rings made with ritual care.
And garden flowers with odours, fragrant, sweet,
As poojah-offrings I consider meet;
New *vastram** too, and precious things untold,
As off'rings I'll accept, not barring gold;
The circuit fail not round my image bright;
Prostrate thyself before the sacred sight;
Let incense mingle with thy mantras deep,
And thus shall thou my holy poojahs keep!"

Thus spake Sri-Ranga, source of life and light,
And as his lips he clos'd—ah! wond'rous sight!—
His glorious form an idol soon became,
Henceforth SRI-RANGANADA is his name!

(*k*) *Tirtam* means lustral water; the Puranna refers to the different modes and rites with which the sacred water is used in poojahs. The reader will observe that, in specifying seme articles in this book as appropriate for poojah offerings and necessary for poojahs, we do not pretend te give an exhaustive catalogue. The text refers to other articles, such as rice, fire, incense, umbrellas, fans, fly-drivers, glass, etc.

* *Vastram* means cloth or robe, generally of silk. Until about the time of Sir Peregrin Maitland, Commander-in-Chief of the Madras Presidency, and in the time of the Hon'ble Court of Directors, the Madras Government used to present a grand silk cloth annually to the goddess Yagata in Black Town with grand parade of military pomp.

Then to the Image so divenly born,
Brahma, from dewy eve to happy morn,
His poojas made; with sacred rites, so deep,
Long years the holy seasons doth he keep.
Enshrind'd that wond'rous Idol thence he bears
Upon his head; to Vraja's bank repairs,
And lays his precious, sacred burden there,
With joy ecstatic and with godly care.
By *guru* taught he seeks the luckly day,
And there deep ritual honors doth he pay
To Ranga's Shrine; then poojah there he makes,
With Ranga's praise he *Satialogam*(*l*) shakes!
The *devas, manus, praja-paties*(*m*) great
Invites good Brahma, on auspicious date,
To view the Shrine, the Idol to adore.
And, cleans'd in Vraja's stream, upon the shore
A crowd celestial round the god appear,
The story of that glorious Shrine to hear.

(*l* Satialogam is the name of Brahma's kingdom; from the legend it would appear that this mythological place is in the vicinity of the river Vraja.

(*m*) The *devas, manus, prajapaties, rishis* and other such mythological or allegorical beings are different grades of spirits or minor deities. As remarked by a European writer, whose name we cannot remember just now, one's hair stands on end when he looks into the accounts given of the various orders of mythological beings that fill the invisible world of the

The sacred story Brahma then relates,
With joy the holy throng the tale elates;
The mantras and the rites divinely taught
By Brahma by that eager crowd are sought;
To Surya-deva Brahma then the Shrine
Entrusts; the mantras and the rites divine
To him the godly seer with care imparts,
And for his mansion, 'bove the skies, he starts!
As time, with mighty strides his course had run,
To Vaivaswata(*n*) did the glorions Sun(*o*)
Resign his charge, and fly beyond the skies.
Then from the *manu* ritual honors rise,
And sacrificial smoke attest his care
For Ranga's Shrine and Ranga's idol there.
And ere the *manu* did his charge resign
To Ikshwak, (*p*) said this holy sire divine :—

Hindus. The extravagant conceptions of the early Hindu poets seem to be common both to the Epic and Puranic periods.

(*n*) Vaivasvata, the seventh and last manu, is said to be an off-spring of the Sun. He is also known (according to Moor) as Satyavrata.

(*o*) The god Surya,

(*p*) Ihshwaku, son of the *manu* Vaivaswata, was the first king of Ayodhia or Oudh, and one of the ancestors of Rama, who has been immortalised by Valmiki, the Hindu Epic Bard, in his famous poem entitled the Ramayanam.

"Accept the sacred trust my royal son,
Oh! happy end, a happy reign begun;
Let poojahs ceaseless rise to Hari's throne,
And may he all thy pious service own.
The father of the gods this Shrine has giv'n,
To honor it the mighty gods have striv'n;
E'en Sesha(*q*) tho' with all his tongues he tried
Its glories to discribe, success denied,
Would hide his sacred thousand hoods with shame,
And bring disgrace upon his honor'd name!"
Thus the great manu: and with pinions fleet,
He rent the skies to rest 'neath Hari's feet!(*r*)

(*q*) Another name for Athiseshan, the serpent-god, who has a thousand heads.

(*r*) To reach the feet of the gods is an oriental expression and means going to god or the departure of the soul from the body. To rest under the shadow of Hari's feet is to enjoy the bliss of Paradise.

Book VII.

THE ARGUMENT.

Ikswaku rules as Sovereign of Oudh—His happy and glorious reign. He laments his inability to do poojahs to Ranga in his Shrine, which is now in Satialogam on the bank of the river Vraja, He contemplates a severe mode of penance in order to obtain Ranga's Shrine from Satialogam, and is encouraged to undertake it by the prophecy of his guru Vasi-t'ha-muui. The penance commences, and the gods, moved with fear and envy, endeavour to thwart him, but do not succeed. Indra attempts to destroy him with his vajra, but fails. Indra complains to Brahma in Satialogam. Discovering the object of Ikshwaku's penance, Brahma swoons away. Vishnu interferes and directs Brahma to carry the Shrine from Satialogam and deliver it to Ikshwaku in Oudh. He does so, and then ascends to Satialogam.

In fair Ayodhia's realm Ikshwaku sate
Upon his throne as lord, high potentate ;
Before him princes, kings and nations bend,
And fame and glory his bright reign attend.
Of Vedas, Sastras and Puranic lore,
His gifted mind possess'd an ample store ;
Both lands and streams his pious works attest,
By gods and men his virtues are confest !
But while around loud plaudits rent the air,
He meditative sate, opprest with care,
As he one day sad memory awoke,

And then his grief upheaving thus he spoke (*a*):—
"Alas! sprung from a godly race, in vain
Most precious time have I employsd to gain
The transient wealth and fame that me surround;
What tho' these regions with my praise resound,
And smiling triumph sit upon my brow,
As more and more my brilliant vict'ries grow?
My sacred charge neglected, how shall I
Mount to yon world so fair, beyond the sky,
Where Runga's holy Shrine by Vraga's stream,
With sacred beauty now doth brightly gleam.
Of yore great Indra and a godly train,
With Surya and my godly sire, to gain
Eternal bliss to Ranga's sacred Shrine
Deep poojahs made, with holy rites divine!
But woe of woes! sore anguish fills my breast,
My offspring too with me shall be unblest;
For e'er must mortals in this world deplore,

(*a*) The legend is a little mysterious, if not confused, here. In the preceding Book the manu Vaivswata entrusted the sacred Shrine of Vishnu to his son Ikshwaku with a solemn charge, and the shrine was at that time on the bank of the Vraja in Satia-logam, or Brahma's world. How Ikshwaku lost the shrine and how it happens that he, in bulogam or our earth, laments the inaccessibility to the Shrine, are points that are apt to excite the reader's curiosity.

While favor'd gods that Shrine above adore!
With penance rigid I the gods shall move,
By penance I my filial duty prove;
The gods, then heeding, shall the prize resign,
And send below to mortals Ranga's Shrine!"
  Resolved, Ayodhia's sov'reign rose and sought
Vasist'ha's (*b*) cell, whence the great Muni taught
Each mystic mantra or each holy rite
That's treasur'd by the faithful Vaishnuvite.
Ikshwak his purpose to the muni states,
And for the holy seer's reply he waits.
The muni thus replies:—"Thy fears resign,
Welcome oh! scion of a race divine.
The sacred prize thou from the gods shalt seize,
And with this penance shalt the gods appease.
Ayodhia's plains Sri-Ranga's Shrine shall greet,
His praises shall thy noble sons repeat,
And from thy house a hero shall arise
Nam'd Rama—whom no mortal dare despise;—
His wrath great Lunka's(*c*) tyrant shall consume,
When he appears, Ravana meets his doom!

(*b*) Vasistah is said to be pre-eminent among the munis. He was the good Ikshwaku's guru or spiritual adviser.

(*c*) The modern Ceylon.

Vibish'na(*d*) now to my prophetic view
Appears; him Rama greets as friend so true,
And leads up to his throne on Lunka's isle,
While gods delighted on him gracious smile.
To him does Rama Ranga's Shrine resign,
Enjoining poojahs and all rites divine;
Vibish'na then that holy Shrine removes
To tract so blest, whose shore Káveri woos;
And from that hallow'd spot ascends pure rite
To Ranga, with the Vishnu poojah bright.—
Go, Ikshwak go thy fond desire fulfil,
And may the gods bend to thy earnest will."

And thus the seer; and by the muni's cell,
To nandavànam(*e*), where no mortals dwell,
To do his penance Ikshwak doth repair,
Dead to each earthly thought or regal care!
The penance so severe and rare began—

(*d*) *Vibishana* was the brother of Ravanna, the autocratic ruler of Lunka. To destory this Ravanna, Vishnu became incarnate as Rama.

(*e*) A flower garden.

Such dreadful penance e'er this did no man!(*f*)—
The gods perplext in solemn conclave meet,
And thus, in council, Indra from his seat:—
"See! mortals now the peace of gods invade;
What seeks Ikshwak by this dread penance made?
He covets doubtless some important boon.
To circumvent him we'll endeavour soon."
The envious gods, with Indra at their head,
To love-awaking Manmathan (*g*) then sped;
The Hindu Cupid soon their mission learns,
On mischief bent his heart voluptuous yearns
To plant Love's passion in a breast so pure,
And god-like Ikshwak's failure to ensure.
With this intent the gods the Archer sent,
And at his downward course the skies were rent,
Unfolding then to mortal view below,

(*f*) According to our legend this penance of Ikshwaku was a terrible business. During the hot season he stood in the midst of a burning furnace; in the "dewy season' he spent his whole time in open air with wet cloths on; and during the cold season he remained neck-deep in cold water. He neither ate nor drank during the performance of the penance, but remained in one continued state of abstraction. His wife, abandoning the comforts and luxuries of the Palace, had to wait on him. Ye suffragettes! hear, read, mark, and inwardly digest.

(*g*) Another name for Kama, the god of Love.

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In Manmathan's descent, a brilliant shew.
Borne on the southern wind the god decends
Fish-banner'd,(*h*) while a charming crowd attends,
Of smiling nymphs, and lovely bright-eyed maids
The cuckoos chaunt their wild notes thro' the glades
Proclaiming him; Vasanta(*i*) too is seen
With Chandra and his soft, attractive sheen.
Where Ikshwak to his penance rare attends,
Thither his way the god of Love now wends.
And in the garden bloom sweet, fragrant flow'rs;
The nymphs all jocund play beneath the bow'rs
Wild Nature rear'd; the maids sing strains of love;
The *kuils*(*j*) and parrots strain their throats above.
And now before the great ascetic stands
The artful Manmathan; his trembling hands
Upon his bow he lays; and then he bends

(*h*) Kama has a fish for his banner. The reason for the selection is variously conjectured; but we think the one given by a European writer, viz., the supposed *aphrodisiac* tendency of fish, as an article of food, the most probable.

(*i*) Vasanta, the god who represents Spring, is the favorite companion of the Indian Cupid. They are always together.

(*j*) The *kuil*, according to the Rev. P. Percival, is the Indian cuckoo. The Bird should be well known to the Indian sportsman.

The ruddy, juicy cane (*k*) between whose ends
A string of honey-bees we clearly scan ;
Then he a flow'r-tipt (*l*) dart straight at the man
Swift sends, with passion's fire his breast to fill,
And all good thoughts within that breast to kill.
Despite Love's dart, aud nymph's alluring smile,
To penance with abstraction, all the while,
Ikshwak attends ; for on that sacred ground
Each one among the motley crowd around
To him appears as wearing Ranga's form ;
To each of these he poojahs doth perform.
Vasanta humbled quickly stole away ;
The maids and nymphs, all fearful of delay,
To spirit-land soon fled, perturb'd, dismay'd ;
And Chandra too to stay was sore afraid ;
While Manmathan, with humble rev'rent tone

(*k*) Kama's bow is made of the sugar-cane.

(*l*) According to Moor, in his " Hindu Pantheon," Kama has five arrows, "each of which is tipped with a flower and which is devoted to, and supposed to preside over, a sense: the flowers are of a heating and inflaming quality." These flowers are said to be the *Chumpa*, the *Amer*, the *Nagkeser*, the *Kitticum* and the *Bela*. According to the writer, just quoted, the Chumpa is the *polyandrian polygnian* flower ; the Amer is supposed to be the mangoe flower; the Nagkeser is a handsome flower with yellow and white petals ; while the Bela is a specimen of the jasmin.

His boldness rash doth with confusion own !
From him his bow and flow'r-tipt darts he flings,
His way to Devalogam swift he wings.
The gods repuls'd again in council met—
Such dire defeats their greater fears beget ;—
Then mighty Indra from great Meru's heights,
With swelling rage, before Ikshwak alights :
With wonder seized he scans the penance deep
That Ikshwak, spite the angry gods, doth keep.
With reverence profound, from penance ris'n,
The great ascetic greets the king of heaven.
With poojahs and with ritual honors bright
He gladly welcomes glorious Indra's sight.
But Indra's pent-up rage no bounds now knew ;
At Ikshwak soon his *vajra* (*m*) swift he threw !
As when Olympian Jove but " gives the nod,
The stamp of fate, and sanction of the god,
High heaven with trembling the dread signal took,
And all Olympus to the centre shook," (*n*)
So when great Indra hurl'd his vajra dread,
His thunders loudly roar'd, amazement spread
From shore to shore ; the world with terror shook,

(*m*) The *vajra* or thunder-bolt is the weapon of Indra, the India Jove.

(*n*) Pope's translation of the *Iliad*, Book 1.

And of the consternation all partook!
Not so Ikshwak. Tho' thus destructive flies
The thunderbolt, yet from him mantras rise
Calm, unobstructed to the azure skies!
The bolt that Indra hurl'd Sri-Ranga spied
From Voikonta, when by his Lakshmi's side;
And swift his *chakra*(o) Ranga twirl'd with pow'r
To save his Ikshwak in that fatal hour!
As when to light exposed, the glow-worm bright,
Subdued doth cease to shed its twinkling light;
So Indra's bolt subdued, stood still with fear,
When Ranga's chakra 'gainst it did appear.
With Ranga's names Ikshwak the air doth fill,
And then his penance dread continued still.
Repuls'd again great Indra sought the skies,
The gods amazed behold him as he flies;
And sad confusion, much distress prevail'd
Among the gods, when next their chief they hail'd.
But restless Indra then to Brahma sped,
And soon the tale, to gods alarming, said.
With wonder seiz'd, o'erwhelm'd with anguish sore,
Him Brahma heard, nor could he heed him more;

(o) The *chakra* or discus is Vishnu's weapon. He is popularly re-presented with the changu (or shell) and chakra in his hand

He stopt his ears, his sacred eyes (*p*) he closed,
Nor to suggest a plan was he dispos'd.
His godly intuition then reveal'd
That Ikshwak—whom Sri-Ranga thus doth shield—
This penance rare performs—and not in vain—
No less than Ranga's holy Shrine to gain!
Bewilder'd, terror struck he stagg'ring falls, (*q*)
The prostrate god great Indra soon appals;
But then restor'd he's led by Indra's aid, (*r*)
To Voikonta, where his complaint he made.
But Ranga, father of the angry gods,
Who both the gods and men alike rewards,
With placid countenance and grace replied :—
"Oh! Brahma, have I e'er to thee denied
A boon? 'gainst Ikshwak must I now decide?
What if by his deep penance he obtains
The holy Shrine, and thus for mortals gains
Voikonta's joys, must gods the act resent?
Can gods the boon, by penance sought, prevent?

(*p*) Brahma having four heads has eight ears and eight eyes.

(*q*) In the text Brahma is said to have fallen to the ground at the startling discovery.

(*r*) In the text we are told that Indra led Brahma by the hand to Voikonta, as the latter apparently was too weak to move about without help.

And now from Vraja's bank that Shrine remove,
(Of Ikshwak's penance rare I full approve)
To fair Ayodhia then the Shrine convey,
My fiat now ordained, must thou obey!
And cease regret; for why should'st thou complain?
What lose the gods to mortals may be gain?
Your welcome pujahs here shall e'er from me
Acceptance find; yet shall I still be free
Each off'ring to receive at my great Shrine,
Where'er its sacred *kalasams* may shine.
Now to Ayodhia's realm I speed to dwell
Till *yugas*(*s*) four her glorious age shall swell;
And then my presence shall that region bless
Where Káveri around its shore doth press
Its liquid treasure bright; and there I rest
Till ages seven expire of *manus* blest.
Then speed, oh Brahma! with my holy Shrine,
And to my Ikshwak the lov'd prize resign!"

The words ambrosial raptured Brahma hears,
Then on Sri-Vishnu's *vahan* swift he bears
The holy Shrine to Ikshwak's loan retreat,
Where he the great ascetic thus doth greet:—

(*s*) A *yuga* is a mythological period of time. The four yugas are Kreta, Treta, Dwapára and Kali.

"Accept, oh scion of a race divine,
This Shrine, where Ranga's presence e'er doth shine;
Thy penance hath almighty Hari mov'd,
He by this shrine hath his acceptance prov'd.
So penance and long vigil now give o'er,
Arise, oh Ikshwak! and thy lord adore!"

The sacred mantras and each holy rite,
To him imparts the god, and from his sight
The gracious Brahma on his *vahan* flies
Back to his world, beyond the vaulted skies!

Book VIII.

THE ARGUMENT.

All the sight of the Shrine Ikshwaku is enraptured— He does poojahs to it, and erects a temple in Ayodhia, placing the shrine in it with great rejoicing and religious rites. His happy reign. In course of time Dhasaradha succeeds to the throne in Ayodhia; and he undertakes an Aswhameda sacrifice in order to get an offspring. Among the men assembled in Ayodhia to assist on this occasion Dharmabrima, the Chola sovereign, appears. He sees Sri-Ranganada's Shrine and longs to possess it himself. He resolves to return to his capital, and by penance obtain the Shrine. He does penance in the Isle of Srirangam, and the rishis of the place remonstrate with him for it. They assure him that Vishnu has already certified his intention to send the Shrine to the Chola king, and they therefore bid him give up penance. Rama is born in Ayodhia as the Son of Dhasarada. He conquers Ceylon and returns with Vibishana, brother of the vanquished ruler of Lunka, to Ayodhia and holds an Aswhameda sacrifice. Dharmabrima attends the sacrifice and returns to his capital in haste. He then erects the Temple at Srirangam, anticipating the advent of the Shrine. Rama, in the meantime, gives the Shrin to Vibishana, before the latter leaves Ayodhia for Lunka. Vibishana, setting out to carry the Shrine to Lunka, on his way stops at Srirangam, and placing the Shrine near the sacred tank *Santhiuapushkarani*, performs divine rites to it. Dharmabrima and the rishis of the locality gladly welcome the advent of the Shrine.

With sacred glow the glorious Shrine so bright
Beams on the god-like Ikshwak's wond'ring sight;
A while he gazes, then, with joy elate,
Around the Shrine doth he perambulate;
His inmost soul deep rapture quite enthralls,
While he before that Shrine now prostrate falls!
Thence poojahs rise with sacred, solemn rites,
And Ranga's praise devoutly he recites.

Between two limpid rills(*a*) a Temple fair
Its sacred dome in Ayodh soon doth rear,
With *mandobas*(*b*) and lofty *gopras*(*c*) bright,
And fount and garden welcome to the sight.
On day auspicious chants with rites combine,
As in that fane(*d*) is placed Sri-Ranga's Shrine;
There priests and rishis, 'mid a num'rous throng,
Good Ikshwak's triumphs loudly shout in song.
The holy feasts his subjects learn to keep,
And he with care attends to poojahs deep;
Right happy thus is Ikshwak's latter reign,
From gods above doth he high favors gain.
At last, its shade when Death did o'er him spread,
To blest Voikonta's shore his spirit fled.

From Ikshwak's race great kings successive reign'd,
Who from the gods immortal honors gain'd;
And *Yugas* four their periods well nigh ran,
When Dhasarada's(*e*) brilliant reign began.

(*a*) These streamlets were named Saraiyunadi and Virasanadi. Whether they are still in existence or not we cannot say,

(*b*) *Mandobas* are halls.

(*c*) *Gopras* are towers that surmount the gateways of Hindu temples.

(*d*) This temple we are told, is still in existence,

(e) Although we do not come across this name in Indian History, yet it seems well known amongst the natives. The legend says Dhasarada lived for 60,000 years.

Long did he rule, belov'd and blest by all,
Tho' one misfortune sore did him befal;
Ayodhia's people with their king deplore,(*f*)
In that his queen no royal offspring bore.
Availing nought Dhas'rada's tears and sighs,
An *Asvameda*(*g*) next he anxious tries.
A pageant crowd of kings and princes great
From all surrounding regions on him wait,
To share the honors of the great event,

(f) To be childless is considered a reproach in all Eastern nations, more especially so in India, where a Hindm who has no male offspring is forced to adopt a son in order to be saved from the fires of *put* or Hell. One is here forcibly reminded of the words of the Hebrew Prophet:—" Oh earth ! earth ! earth ! hear the word of the Lord. Write ye this man childless."

(g) An *Aswhameda* is known as the horse-sacrifice. The horse is not really immolated, but it plays a very important part in the sacrifice, so called. A suitable horse is selected by the king, who undertakes this grand sacrifice, and the animal after being caparisoned with certain sanctioned rites, is let loose and driven round the world—so they say. The sacrificial horse is followed by a brilliant cavalcade, composed of kings, and princes, and their armies. The following extract from the *Asiatic Research* is descriptive of the assembly at a sacrifice of this kind:— "Thither were previously collected the gods, the sages &c. for the sake of receiving their respective shares. Brahma too, the sovereign of the gods, with St'hanu, and Narrayana, chief of beings, and the supporters of the universe, and the divine mothers of all the celestials, met together there." At Dhasarada's Aswamheda fifty-six nations were represented.

All hopeful that the gods may soon relent.
 Among the crowd assembled there we scan
King Dharmabrima(*h*) from South Hindustan.
Sri-Ranga's Shrine he views with keen delight,
Its story while the rishis there recite;
From him high ritual honors greet the skies,
Then lo! he covets fair Ayodhia's prize!
"From Vraja's bank did Ranga's Shrine descend?
For it with Ikshwak did the gods contend?
Like him a penance rigid I will keep,
Like him a great renown for zeal I'll reap."
Thus mused the Chola ruler in his pride,
As from that brilliant throng he turn'd aside
Homeward to speed, to execute his scheme,
And realize the vision of his dream!
 Upon the Isle that sacred streams(*i*) surround,
Where solemn stillness ever reigns around,
His vigil long with penance rigid, deep,
Ambitious Dharmabrima there doth keep.
But rishis from the wilds and forests near

(*h*) This Dharmabrima was a king of the Chola dynasty, and he claims the honor of having built the celebrated temple at Srirangam. Subsequent additions of course were made to it from time to time.

(*i*) The Kaveri and Coleroon are referred to.

Of his great penance soon they wond'ring hear;
In haste they to the lonely Isle repair
To spy out Dharamabrima's penance there;
The scenes they there behold their ire provoke,
And to the proud ascetic thus they spoke:—
"Ah! ruler of great Chola's vast domain,
What dost thou by such penance seek to gain?
The public weal, the nation's wealth, good laws,
Are matters that to kings should rather cause
Most anxious care, and painful doubt and fear;
By why should kings on desert tracts appear
Absorb'd in vigil and with penance rare,
Repulsing from their breasts the nation's care?
'Tis our vocation to appease the gods,
And make them yield their highest, best rewards
By penance, vigil and by rites austere
On mountain heights or desert tracts so drear.
Of blessings on such labors that descend
All rulers may partake, (j) but gods forefend
That kings and princes should aspiring rise
To sacred labors that we rishis prize.

(j) It would appear that one-sixth of the merits resulting from the penance of the rishis is placed to the credit of their rulers or kings.

'Gainst thwarting foes if us thou wouldst but shield,
The gods the boon desir'd by thee shall yield."
The Chola ruler, thus accosted, rose
(His rueful face with burning passion glows)
From penance; and to rishis standing there
The object stated of such penance rare.
The rishis in reply:—"Oh king! desist,
In task so needless would'st thou still persist?
Retrace thy steps, thy busy court regain,
The boon thou seekest thou shalt sure obtain;
Convey'd from Ayodh shall that Shrine so bright
Upon this smiling Isle ere long alight,
Where th' liquid treasure of a tank(*k*) we greet,
And sacred rivers so harmonious meet.
Of old, not distant from his lonely Isle,
A city smiled(*l*)—'tis now a sandy pile—
And in that ancient city, bright and gay,

(*k*) The tank in Srirangam known as Santhirapushkarani.

(*l*) Reference is here made to the ancient Ooraiyur, better known to people in Trichinopoly as Worriore, a town about a mile and-a-half from the Cantonment. It is now an uninteresting litle village and is included within the limits of the Municipal Town of Trichinopoly. At the time the legend refers to, Ooraiyur was the capital of the ancient Chola kingdom. It is said to have been destroyed by a sand-storm or cyclone. Not far from the modern Worriore, towards the South, there is a rock on the bank of the Woycondan channel which is

Thy ancestors once held imperial sway;
But, fatal hour! dread Siva, in his ire,
That city doomed to swift destruction dire.
A sacred blossom stole the Chola king,
And thence did all the nation's troubles spring;
And for the sacrilege a shower of sand

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known as "Cholan-parai" or the Chola-rock. This rock is said to be the site where the old palace of the ancient Cholas once stood. It is at present almost overrun with prickly-pear & other rank and obnoxious vegetation. On one side of the rock there is an inscription in ancient Tamil characters. Some thirty years ago this inscription exercised the ingenuity and erudition of several local *savants*. One learned gentleman, with apparent Pickwickian erudition and archœlogical insight, was able to decipher the inscription, & the result of his learned labors was the discovery of the fact that treasure was buried in the place were the inscription lay. On this followed a long Report by the Collector of Trichinopoly to the local Government, communicating to them the important discovery and suggesting excavation for the hidden treasure. The local Government, we are sorry to say, in a very weak moment, sanctioned a respectable sum to be spent on the business, and approved of the Collector's idea to undertake the excavation of the rock. After most of the sum alotted for the purpose had been spent in vain, the Collector abandoned the idea of further pursuit in this direction.

Three years ago the idea of excavating for the valuable treasure, supposed to be hidden in a vault under the Cholan parai, again revived. A few enterprising gentlemen got up a syndicate to work out a plan of operation for the purpose. The course of the Kodamuriti Channel near the Rock had to be diverted, and a well to be traced which is supposed to mark the entrance to the treasure house; but beside the finding of an ancient coin and some domestic vessels, we are told, no other result was met with. But sooner or later, it is still hoped that the treasure hunt will prove a huge success!

Did Siva pour upon that goodly land.(*m*)
'T was then we rishis to a forest sped,

(*m*) Our legend makes this casual allusion to the destruction of Ooraiyur, the ancient Chola seat. But the tradition connected with the event is as follows. A rishi planted a flower garden on the Fort Rock at Trichinopoly, where he grew choice *jevandis* or chrysanthemums. Every morning these flowers used to be culled by him for the purpose of the Siva pujah, Siva being the presiding deity in the temple on the Fort Rock. But one day the mali or gardener of the Chola sovereign from Ooraiyur stole some of the flowers from the garden, and the "accursed thing" was used by members of the king's family. The gardener, discovering the perpetators of the theft and the fact that the Chola king was in manner privy to the sacrilegious act, carried his complaint to the Idol in the temple on the Fort Rock. Up to this time Siva's idol, which always faced the East, in great wrath turned towards the West, i. e. in the direction of Ooraiyur, and that ancient city was destroyed completely by a shower of sand—*manmari* it is called by the natives. But before sending such destruction, the good Sivaites were warned by Siva through the rishis, as were the people of Sodam and Gomorrah of old; and, according to the tradition, all good Sivaites left Ooraiyur and escaped destruction. The offending Chola sovereign also took horse and left the city, but he did not escape the storm. Besides himself, his wife the queen—a righteous woman—and his favorite concubine also mounted the same steed, and while they were passing through the bed of the Kaveri, the wicked king, finding his wife rather burdensome, pushed her into the river. But, being a righteous woman, she was rescued by a rishi, and her posthumous offspring kept up the line of the ancient

Where *Thalapia* (*n*) now did his penance dread ;
And there, with triumph and with glory bright,
Sri-Narrain burst upon our wistful sight !
Viyakarama (*o*) destroy'd, he then returned
To bless us who had for his presence yearned.
The happy rishis then assembled there
Sri-Narrain thus besoke, in earnest pray'r:—
'Oh! Swami blest! Namo! Oh *Hari* great!

Chola kings. Her wicked husband, who had been safe so long as he had his wife by him, no sooner be separated from her than the storm overtook him, and he and his concubine were soon buried under the shower of sand. This tradition may be true so far as the destruction itself of Ooraiyur is concerned; and it is probable that the city also was destroyed by a cyclone or simoom or some such phenomenon; and it is not unlikely that the event afforded the poets of the period a fit subject to their imagination "and fine phrensy rolling" for the production of the romantic story we have given above. Excavations made in Worriore from time to time have discovered fragments of culinary vassels of a very antiquated description as well as of *debris* of buildings.

(*n*) Thalapia was a celebrated rishi.

(*o*) Viyakarama is said to have been a malignant demon who used to harrass and destroy the rishis in the forests in and about Trichinopoly, while these men were engaged in rigid penance.

In grateful praise we sing thy triumphs late,
In mercy grant that in this grove may shine
A sacred image of thy form divine ;
To it may rishis ritual honors pay,
Here dost thou gracious hear when suppliants pray.'
Then Perumal thus sweet words of promise spake,
Ere he to Voikonta his flight did take.—
'Oh! munis blest this boon shall granted be,
My idol in this realm shall rishis see.
In Ayodh soon as Dhasarada's son
Shall I appear; and, Lunka's conquest won,
Vibish'na shall Sri-Ranga's Shrine obtain,
From him the Shrine shall Chola's sov'reign gain.'
And then the father of the gods the skies
Ascended as we gazed with wistful eyes.
As Surya too hath presaged that event,
Why art thou still upon this penance bent?
Let vigils cease, such undue zeal restrain,
Return with gladness to thy Court again!"
The munis ceased, and from surrounding groves
Sweet swelling chant and holy rites arose.
Euchanted, Dharmabrima speeds, away

To Chola's capital quite light and gay.

Ere long in Ayodh Rama then appears,
(Now cease Dhas'rada's painful sighs and tears)
And, as foretold by rishis of renown,
Proud Lunka vanquish'd,(*p*) Rama gives the crown
To good Vibish'na, and the twain return

(*p*) The Lunka war is very briefly alluded to in our legend. The following outline of the event as described in the Ramayana, by professor Williams, will be interesting to our English readers :—"At the commencement we are introduced to the Hindu Olympus, where the gods are met in solemn conclave, dismayed at the insolence of the ten-headed demon monarch Ravana, who from his island throne in Ceylon menaced heaven and earth with destruction. Tha secret of his power lay in a long course of penance, which, according to the Hindu conception, gained for him who practised it, however evil his designs, superiority to the gods themselves. and enabled Ravana to extort from the god Brahma, this remarkable boon—that neither gods, genii, demons nor giants should be able to vanquish him, As, however, in his pride he scorned to ask security from man also he remained vulnerable from this one quarter if any mortal conld be found capable of coping with him. At the request of the gods, Vishnu consents to become mortal for this purpose, and four sons are born to Dasarat'ha, king of Ayodha or Oudh, from his three wives, the eldest (Rama-Chandra) possessing half the nature of Vishnu; the second (Bharata) a fourth part; and the other two (Lakshmana and Satrughna) having the remaining quarter between them.

To famed Ayodhia where the people yearn
To greet the godlike Rama from the fight.

While yet a stripling Rama and his brothers are taken to the court of Janaka, king of Mithila. He had a wonderful bow, once the property of Siva, and had given out that the man who could bend it should win his beautiful daughter Sita. On the arrival of Rama and his brothers the bow is brought on an eight-wheeled platform, drawn by no less than 5000 men. Rama not only bends the bow but snaps it asunder with a concussion so terrible that the whole assembly is thrown to the ground, and the earth quivers as if a mountain were rent in twain. Sita then becomes the wife of Rama. On his return to his father's capital preparations are made for his inauguration, when the mother of one of his brothers (Bharata) jealous of the preference shewn to Rama, demands of the king, the fulfilment of a promise made to her in former years that he would grant to her any two boons she asked. A promise of this kind in eastern countries is quite inviolable; and the king being required to banish his favorite son Rama and instal Bharata is forced to comply. Rama, therefore, with his wife Sita, and his brother Lakshmana are banished, and the broken-hearted king pines away in inconsolable anguish. The banished Rama establishes himself with Sita and his brother Lakshmana in the Dandaka forests near the Godaveri. There Sita is carried off by Ravana, the demon king of Ceylon. Upon this Rama makes an alliance with Sugriva, the king of the Monkeys or foresters; and, assisted by them and by Vibishana, the brother of Ravana, invades the capital of the ravisher; and, after recovering Sita, returns to Ayodhia, of which he assumes the sovereignty."

Return'd triumphant and with high delight.
Installed now on Ayodhia's ancient throne,
His rule surrounding nations gladly own;
Around him next a brilliant host attends
Of loyal subjects and his royal friends.
From all o'er Ind that vast surrounding band
With Dharmabrima thus before him stand:
For he an *Aswhameda* undertakes,
And fit selection of a steed he makes;
With triumph, 'mid the nation's great delight,
The sacrifies is held, with sanctioned rite.
Vibish'na seen amoung the pagent throng
Awakes afresh desire, expectant long,
In Dharmabrima's breast; for oft foretold
By devas and by holy seers of old
Was Lunka's conquest and Vibish'na's toil,
By which Sri-Ranga's Shrine on Chola soil
Should fast descend: and straightway to the Isle
He speeds where sacred confluent rivers smile.
And there, with sacred art and holy rite,
The Chola ruler on a pleasant site
Erects a Fane, with tower and dome so fair,(*q*)

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q. This fane is said to be the present temple at Srirangam without its modern additions.

Ere long Sri-Ranganada's name to bear;
With Brahmins pure doth he then there await
The advent of that wond'rous Shrine so great.
Behold now, as forewarned, Sri Ranga's Shrine
Which Rama to Vibish'na did resign!
With it, this solemn charge was also given:—
"This Shrine for which the gods above had striv'n
Accept; thus Rama Lunka's prince rewards,
And may their richest gifts th'immortal gods
On thee bestow; with sacred rites adore
This Idol, which to Ayodh Brahma bore;
The poojahs sanctioned must thou not forbear,
But make Sri-Ranga's honors thy great care."
And then upon upon his head that Shrine so bright
Vibish'na Southwards bears; by day and night
O'er Indian plain and stream, with zealous toil
He journeys, bound for Lunka's fruitful soil.
But as he trod upon the lovely Isle,
That, woo'd by Kaveri, doth happy smile,
Upon its shore he laid the sacred load,
Where rishes in surrounding groves abode.
With prayer, ablutions in the sacred tank
He there performs, and on the river-bank
The noon-day rites before the sacred Shrine

He strictly does, inspired with thoughts divine.
The glorious Shrine so welcome to their sight,
By Dharmabrima and the rishes bright
Is sought ; Vibish'na they with rapture greet,
And reverent fall they at the pilgrim's feet.
With joy and gladness doth the shore abound,
The lonely groves with Ranga's praise resound.

Book IX.

THE ARGUMENT.

Vibishana performs acts of devotion on the holy Isle, and at the invitation of the Chola sovereign he makes a short stay at Sri-rangam. During his stay there the *Brahma-utchavam* is celebrated for nine days with great magnificence and glory. Vibishana, re-suming his journey towards Lunka, is about to lift the Shrine when he finds that it would not move. He laments the circumstance, but Vishnu consoles him and bids him return to his capital without the Shrine. Ranganada elects to remain where he is, because the isle was blessed with sacred rivers and the sacred tank Santhira-pushkarani; because the Rishis and the Brahmins there were most excellent people; the Chola ruler was a very just and devout man, and because he (Ranganada) had decided long ago to dwell beside the sacred Kaveri, and thus give this river a superiority over all other streams, the Ganges included. Vibishana returns to Lunka, and Dharmabrima erects walls around the Temple, and builds chatrams, lays out gardens, &c. On account of these buildings and of the religious festivals and rites, the holy Isle soon rises to religious fame and importance.

Beside the favor'd tank(*a*) a group we view
Of holy rishis, and Vibish'na too;
With solemn mantra and with rite so grave,
The sacred fount they greet and in it lave.
Then follows poojah; king and people there
Sri-Ranga's service with high ardor share;

(*a*) The tank *Santhirapushkarani*.

And as each sanctioned rite now terminates,
Upon the pilgrim Dharmabrima waits.
"Oh! *alwar*(b) blest! (thus Chola's sovereign cries)
The glorious Shrine that gleams before mine eyes
Rare blessings hath for my dominion fair
Secured; 'tis thro' thy zealous toil and care
That happy Chola with her sons accosts
To-day the chief among celestial hosts;
But for thy labour and thy godly zeal
Would we these present joys ecstatic feel?
The gods reward thee for thy labors blest,
And in Voikonta thou eternal rest?
But Chola and her grateful sons this day
To Lunka's chief renowned would earnest pray,
That he may sojourn longer in this Isle,
Where peace abounds and confluent rivers smile".
Vibish'na thus responding gracious spake:—
"A sojourn brief upon this Isle I'll make,
And then to Lunka with this Shrine I'll speed;
May Chola and her king be blest indeed!
But ere the eastern sky tomorrow's sun
Begilds, must festive rites be here begun;
By Ikshwak was this ordinance observed,

(b) Alwar means a distinguished dovotee of Vishnu.

All Ayodh's sovereigns thus have Ranga served;
The *Brahma utchavam* nine days shall last,
And on these days from thy dominion vast
Let festal joys with my deep rites ascend,
With Ranga's praise shall mystic mantras blend."
  Thence Dharmabrima hasent'd with great joy
Of holy, learned Brahmins five t'employ,
From them th' auspicious hour to ascertain,
And knowledge of each holy rite to gain.
Then torch and banner meet the people's view,
And round the *vahans*(c) grand crowd not a few;
While labor skill'd and decorative art
Great pleasure to the glorious scene impart.
Gay *dhasis*(d) nymph-like, fair as Indra's train—
Whose glance bewitching darteth not in vain,—
Appear amongst the crowd with dulcet strains,
And thus the feast full brilliancy attains.

(c) We have already informed the teader rhat a vahan is a steed on which the gods convey themselves from place to place. For the *Brahma-utchavam* festival, the text says, nine vahans were constructed, one of them being used each day of the festival for the conveyance of Ranga's shrine. These vahans reprerented the eagle, the swan, the lion, the snake, the horse, the elephant, the monkey, a car and the shrine of Indra.

(d) *Dhasis* are dancing girls, who are always foremost in Hindu processions.

Next wrapt in silk is Ranga's Idol seen ;
His garment glitters with a dazzling sheen,
With diamonds and most precious stones it gleams ;
His coronet with costy jewels beams.
And thus bedeck'd, in easy posture, lay
Sri-Ranganada on a couch so gay.
And in a *mandoba* so lofty, fair,
Beneath a *punnai*(e) tree, with pomp and care,
The Shrine is placed ; thence daily poojahs rise,
And people greet the Shrine with wond'ring eyes.
Among the offerings presented there
Are rice and cake, and luscious fruit most rare,(*f*)
While Brahmins grain, and robes, and fruitful lands,
And cows and gold receive from liberal hands.(*g*)
The feast now o'er, the Idol in the Shrine

(*e*) The *punnai* treee, according to the late Rev. P. Percival, is the Calophyllum, Inophylium. The flowers are very fragrant and look very much like the lily.

(*f*) In the text a rather amusing catalogue is given of the offerings made to Sri Ranganada. No less than 32 kinds of boiled rice were offered. Five kinds of fruit are mentioned, and among them are the Jack, Mango and Guava. Ten varieties of cakes formed part of the good things provided on the occasion.

(*g*) These five kinds of gifts or alms to Brahmins are specially noted in the text.

Ablution undergoes with rites divine,—(*h*)
The odorous oils pour'd on his sacred head
Rill sweetly down and o'er his body spread.
Vibish'na lingers still upon the Isle
Where sanctity abounds and nought is vile;
But Lunka's sea-girt shore in dreams he sees,
When sudden thoughts of home the pilgrim seize.
And now to Ranga's isle he bids farewell,
While grateful feelings fast his bosom swell;
Then lo! he bends with reverent hands to lift
The Shrine, beloved as Rama's parting gift.
But lackaday! the pilgrim quakes with fear,
From him unbidden starts tear after tear!—
The Shrine a fixture seems, it can't be moved,
Abortive all Vibishna's efforts proved.
To Orpheus what were earth or light or life,
When Pluto's region held his darling wife;
Thus to Vibish'na what were Crown or Fane
Without his Shrine beloved, ah! loved in vain!
Then with his falling tears, the Idol's feet
The devotee with grief sincere did greet.
But Ranga, father of the gods above,

(*h*) The ceremony of bathing the god is called *mangala-stanam*.

Whose foremost attribute is boundless love,
These words consoling, thro' the Idol, spake:
"Vibishna, go thy way, these fears forsake,
Upon this Isle my fixed abode I make!
With sacred glow here tank and rivers smile,
And holiness doth woo this hallowed Isle;
The Rishis and the Brahmins here who dwell
All other men for purity excel! (*i*)
The sovereign, too, great Dharmabrima blest,
Of godly men would rank among the best.
My good Vibish'na therefore here I stay,
To Lunka's shore must thou now wend thy way;
There make great Menu's Code thy guiding light,
And by it rule that favour'd realm so bright!
Wherefore I bid thee go? why here I stay?
List thou awhile, and close attention pay.
In days of yore on Vindhya's lonely height
Famed Kaveri and other rivers bright
Assembled, and with guileless sprightly glee
Themselves disported there right mirthfully.

(*i*) This is certainly a very high compliment to the Sri-Rangam Brahmins of the time. Many a Brahmin wishes and longs to make Srirangam his dwelling place when he retires from service. At the present day Brahmins have taken up their residence in the Isle, and their imposing bungalows and beautiful gardens lend enchantment to the view.

A *Gandarva*(*j*) then passed the mountain side
Greeting the maiden group as now he hied
His way aerial on a mission bent;(*k*)
And Ganges vow'd his 'hail' for her was meant,
'Not so—the Gandarva,' said Kaveri,
'Intends his kind salute alone for me.'
Between the Rivers grew contention warm,
When lo! the Gandarva who raised this storm
Repassed the mountain side, greeting again;
To him the wrathful disputants complain.
E'en gods from ladies' quarrels free would be,
And so the minstrel, with sound policy,
Equivocates:—'The greatest of you there,'
(He blandly said) 'the preference should share.'
The disputants to Brahma next they sped,
To Kaveri thus Brahma smiling said:—
'As Ganges issued from Sri-Vishnu's feet,
As most renowned that stream all people greet;
By her renown to thee is done no harm,

(*j*) A Gandarva, the reader has already been told, is a celestial chorister.

(*k*) We are told that this Gandarva, named Visurasan, was flying from the North towards the South to worship Vishnu at his shrine in Malabar, where this deity is known as Padbanadan.

Refrain thou therefore from debate so warm.'
To Himalaya next the stream betakes
Herself, and on its heights a penance makes;
The four-faced Brahma on those heights appears,
And with this edict tries to dry her tears:—
'Henceforth shall Ganges and thou Kaveri
As equal by all men regarded be.'
Thus spake the god, and on his vahan fair
So Satialogam did he swift repair.
Still unappeased the jealous stream now view
As filled with rage to Chola's realm she flew;
With penance there she moves the deity:—
'Oh sire benignant! must I only be
To Ganges equal, that so gloriously
Flow'd from thy sacred feet,(l) transcendant, bright?

(l) Sir W. Jones, in his Hymn to Ganga, gives another version of the source of the Ganges thus:—

"Above the stretch of mortal ken
On bless'd Kailasa's top, where every stem
Glow'd with a vegetable gem.
Mahesa sate, the dread and joy of men;
While Parvati, to gain a boon,
Fix'd on his locks a beamy moon,
And hid his frontal eye in jocund play,
With reluctant sweet delay.
All nature straight was lock'd in dim eclipse,
Till Brahmans pure, with hollowed lips
And warbled prayers, restored the day;
When Ganga from his brow, by heavenly fingers prest,
Sprang radiant and descending graced the caverns of the West."

To me o'er her now grant superior right.'
And to this River I this promise made,
(Nor can that promise I for thee evade)
'Proud Ganges greatest hitherto hath been,
As from my feet she flow'd with beauteous sheen;
But henceforth thou of streams shall greatest be,
Beside thy swelling bosom silvery,
My sacred presence e'er shall glorious dwell,
Of thy renown shall unborn ages tell!'
That promise made of old I now fulfil,
Dry up thy tears, it is my sovereign will;
Upon this holy Isle I choose to dwell,
Now therefore go, and bid this Shrine farewell."(*m*)

(*m*) Another version of Vibishana's loss of the Shrine, which is current among Hindus in Southern India, is as follows:— When Rama gave the Shrine to Vibishana he imposed on him one condition, viz., that he was never to let the Shrine go from his hands! When Vibishana came to the isle of Srirangam the refreshing waters of the Kaveri and the seclusion of the place attracted him irresistibly; and Vibishana, yielding to such attractions, asked Ganesa or the belly-god— mentioned already in a previous book—to hold the Shrine and not to rest it on the ground till he finished his acts of devotion in the Kaveri. But directly Vibishana commenced his mantras and his ablution, Ganesa put the Shrine down and hurried away to the Fort Rock, which was his famous resort. When Vibishana retnrned he found that he codld not lift the Shrine; and, waxing wrath, he went in pursuit of the offending Ganesa, and, finding him on the Fort Rock of Trichinopoly, gave him a treamendous knock on the head. The Idol of Ganesa on the Rock, it is said, still bears the impression on his pate of Vibishana's kuncles.

Thus Ranga ; and Vibish'na, heaving sighs,
To him, with grief o'er-flowing, thus replies :—
"When Ranga, father of the gods, resolves,
All opposition, e'er so strong, dissolves ;
Still grant that I may daily serve thee here,
With poojahs deep may I this Shrine revere.
Oh Ranganada! hear thy suppliant's voice,
Thy sight alone can make this heart rejoice ;
Vibish'na 'reft of Ranga's heaven-sprung Shrine,
On Lunka's shore, with grief opprest, must pine?"
Then Ranga :—"Pilgrim, all these fears forsake,
And to thy kingdom swift thyself betake ;
From this my hallowed Shrine I thee shall bless,
And thee shall follow bliss and righteousness.
As long as yonder Sun and Moon endure,
Thy happy reign shall last in strength secure ;
And then, with Brahma at this kalpa's end,(*n*)
To Voikonta's bright shore thy way thou'lt wend,
To quaff with me in bliss the nectar'd bowl,
Till 'gain a Brahmic age(*o*) its course shall roll ;

(*n*) Reference has already been made to Brahma's age in Book VI of our legend.

(*o*) An age of Brahma is a kalpa.

Then finally in *Moksha* shalt thou rest
In endless bliss with other spirits blest."
With kind farewells Vibish'na southward turns,
As for his island home his bosom yearns;
And Dharmabrima on the holy Isle
Great walls with gopras builds in gorgeous style;
For rishis walks and cloister'd cells abound,
And *chatrams*(*p*) with fair gardens smile around;
With holy festivals and sanctioned rite
To fame religious wakes the holy site!(*q*)

(*p*) A *chatram* is a sort of inn or rest-house intented for the accommodation of Hindu travellers. Generally opulent Hindus spend large sums on such charitable institutions. In Tanjore *chatrams* established by the old Rajahs and by charitable families are still in existence and are very numerous. Up to date a very expensive establishment is kept up for the maintenance and superintendence of these useful institutions. Here Hindu travellers are generally fed gratuitously. But retrenchment now seems the order of the day.

(*q*) The legend of Sri Ranganada's Shrine virtually ends here. And we might here take the opportunity of correcting a mistaken impression which prevails concerning the Idol that is now to be seen in the Shrine at Srirangam. It is popularly believed by the Hindus that the Shrine and Idol which Vibishana conveyed to the Isle were made of gold. When, as the legend has it, Vibishana found that he could not move the Shrine, he left it and went away to Ceylon; and when subsequent additions and improvements were made to the temple, originally constructed by Dharmabrima. the shrine was covered

over, and a tomb erected just over the site where Vibishna's shrine lay. On this tomb lies the large Idol now seen within the dome at Srirangam, with the thousand-headed snake for its bed. No one is allowed into the *sanctum sanctarum* where the Idol is; but we are told the Idol is made of brick and mortar, and it has no ornaments of any kind. The Idol that is brought round in procession during the great Margaly festival and other heigh festival occasions is a miniature likeness of the big one, and it is made ef *pancha logam* or the five metals already referred to in a previous Book. This Idol, when brought out is gloriously decked with the most costly gems and ornaments. There is a story afloat and it is given by Bingley in his scientific work—"Useful knowledge"—that a very valuable gem or gems worn by the Idol at Srirangam now decorate the Crown of the Russian Czar. The story runs thus :—It wood appear that about a century ago when the Idol at Srirangam was brought round in procession during a festival, decked out with costly gems and glittering jewels, a pensioned sepoy among the crowd was attracted by the sight of these gems. He thenceforth set himself to obtain some of them. In order to effect his design he seems to have become, all of a sudden, a very ardent devotee, fasting and praying and performing ablutions above the ordinary run. Such religious ardour secured for him the confidence and esteem of the Temple Brahmins, and he was allowed access more than the others to the Shrine and to the interior of the Temple. He watched his time, and a favorable opportunity one night occurring, he stole some of the gems and very adroitly set off for Madras, where he sold them to a Ship Captain, whose vessel was on the eve of sailing for Europe. The Captain took these gems home, and there they changed hands from one merchant to another, till finally they

were bought by a Jewish diamond-merchant at Amsterdam. About this time the Czar of Russia was re-setting his Crown with the most costly gems he could secure, and his agents in different parts of the Continent were on the look out for the required commodity. One of the Agents came across the Jewish merchant and secured the gems after paying him a vast sum of money. A rather unique condition of this sale was that the Jewish merchant was to enjoy a life pension for parting with his precious ware. It is said that these gems are to be seen even at the present day in the Czar's Crown.

Mr. Hemingway, it may be, is giving us another version of this story by quoting from Mr. J. D. Rees' *Tours in India* in the following passage:— "There is a tradition that the celebrated Orloff diamond which figures as the chief ornament on the Imperial sceptre of the Czar, was once one of the eyes of the idol at Srirangam and was stolen by a French deserter in the eighteenth century." It is not improbable that various thefts of jems and jewellery have occurred in the Temple, in spite of the fact that a careful and responsible agency is employed to safeguard them, & to keep them from being juggled away. Mr. Hemingway gives yet another instance of such sacrilege. It would appear that in days of yore an adroit thief managed to make away with some of the jewellery. But retribution soon followed the act. The offender was killed at the head-sluice of the Uyacondan channel, and hence the place is known as *Vettuvoitalla* or place of cutting. Folk, travelling by the South Indian Railway, would have found a place named "Pettavathalay,"—a Railway station 15 miles from Trichinopoly. It is another name for "Vettuvattalai," but it is clearly a mutilation. A Railway doctor once admired the nomenclature, and very ingeniously endeavored to make it signify, "In the womb that bore me." Of course the medico

was wrong. The proper name is Petaivathalai, which simply means the cart stand at the head sluice. The latest instance of sacrilegeous theft in the Srirangam Temple occurred on the night of the 15th June 1902. The next morning the Temple servants discovered that a burglarious entry had been effected through the roof of the "Garbagraham," which is the inner shrine located in the innermost enclosure of the Temple. In the shrine are the "moveable deities" which are always decked with costly jewellery and rare gems. The Temple authorities found on the occasion in question that 25,000 Rupees worth of valuables, consisting of precious stones such as diamonds, rubies, sapphires, amethists and gold and silver ornaments, were whipped away by the thieves. Some of the Temple servants were arrested on suspicion. But within three weeks after the burglary some Brahmins found themselves in custody of the local Police at Bombay, having in their possession most of the stolen property—a golden brick worth 7,000 Rupees among the collection. Mr. Power, Inspector of Police at Bombay, soon after brought about 12 or 13 of the men arrested there to Trichinopoly, where only 5 of them were charged before the local Deputy Magistrate, Mr. C. Krishnaswami Naidu, with Housebreaking and Theft. After nine months trial the whole of them were convicted and sentenced to various periods of imprisonment and to Fines. It is rather remarkable that the culpirits were all Brahmins hailing from Towns in Northern India.

Book X.

THE ARGUMENT.

The reader is again introduced to Siva'a paradise on Mount Kailasam, where Narathar is seen. Siva descants on the extraordinary sanctity of Srirangam. He describes the geographical situation of the nine saered tanks on the Isle, and dwells on their special characteristics. Those who perform ablutions in these tanks are enjoined to bestow alms of a particular description, the efficacy of which is extraordinary. The narrative then closes.

On blest Kailasa's cliff once more is seen,
With keen delight and ardor in his mien,
Famed Narathar; again deep notes resound
Of dulcet strains; celestial hosts surround
Mahesa! while his hallowed lips distil
Ambrosial words. Upon the sacred hill
The sage divine Parvati's lord entreats,
With supplications thus the god he greets:—
"Oh glorious consort of a queen so bright,
Whose presence dread dispels the gloom of night!
Creator and preserver, lord divine,
Upon beclouded minds vouchsafe to shine.
Led by the torch of legendary lore,
Fain would I o'er its hidden pages pore;
And from its murky caverns, deep, and vast,

Awake the distant, unrecorded Past.
Great Mahadeva! thou the king of Dread,
The crescent Moon shines from thy glorious head,
And fork-tongued serpents twine around thy neck;
Say thou, whose shoulders human heads bedeck,||
What blessings on Sri-Ranga's Isle abound,
Where streams and honored tanks the Shrine
surround?"

The king of Dread, with ashy, musing face,†
Benignant thus replies with godly grace:—
"The soil around thy Isle is holy ground,
There peace and bliss immortal e'er abound;
Who ever longs the sacred sod to greet
In *Moksha* with eternal life shall meet;
And he who treads such ground shall never see
The least of *Naraga's* dread misery;
But those who dwell upon that Isle so fair,
The guerdon they secure, so high, so rare,

|| Moor, in describing Siva, as popularly represented, says:— "Serpents emblems of eternity, form his ear-rings, called *Naga kundala*: his pendant collar of human heads (*Mundamala*) marks his character of destruction or Time; and his frontal crescent point at its most obvious measurement by the phases of the Moon. These are among the attributes that generally distinguish Mahadéva"

† Sir William Jones.

Nor tongue can tell nor mortal ears e'er hear;(*a*)
There all should Ranga serve with faith and fear!
Besides the streams that there harmonious meet,
Are *thirthams*(*b*) nine who in these waters sweet
Shall lave, adoring Ranga in his Shrine,
Absolv'd from sins, shall share his grace divine;
Their offspring too and ancestors shall(*c*) see
Their labours blest; from sin, shall all be free!

1. Within Sri-Ranga's temple walls so high
A *thirtham*(*d*) famed attracts the pilgrim's eye;
With holy rites prescribed who in it laves,
From Naraga his soul immortal saves!

(*a*) The attentive reader will observe in the seven lines preceding this line the gradations of happiness allotted to those who have faith in Srirangam; such persons are here told off into three classes: they who live at a distance and therefore cannot see the sacred spot, but who desire to see it; those who visit the sacred spot; and those who make their abode in the hallowed spot. Each class has a peculiar privilege rising in degree.

(*b*) The word *thirtham* is sometimes used to denote lustral water. It is here used in its generic sense, and means simply water.

(*c*) The efficacy of abulution, with prescribed rites, in these nine tanks is said to be such that not only is thereby secured the salvation of him who performs it, but his ancestors, up to twenty-one generations backward, and his descendants down to thirty generations forward, are saved by it from their sins.

[*d*] The tank here referred to is the one known as Santhirapushkarani. It is situated near the Shrine of Sri-Ranganada, and the other eight tanks are around it.

Shorn of his silv'ry beams the hapless Moon
Here painful vigil kept to gain a boon!
And 'neath the *punnai* tree he (*e*) planted there
He penance made with great religious care.
Hence sacred is this tank, to pilgrims dear,
None dare approach it without faith and fear! (*f*)
2. The *Vilva-thirtham* (*g*) eastward yonder lies,
Its healing waters anxious sinners prize.
Once on its bank a rishi penance made,
Beneath the overhanging *vilva's* shade
From sinful taint its waters mortals free,
Most efficacious here is charity.

[*e*] The English reader will here excuse the masculine gender attributed in this passage to the Moon; this usage in Hindu Mythology militates against the custom of ascribing the feminine gender to *Selene* of the Greek Mythology; to Diana or *Luna* of the Roman Mythology; and to *la Lune* of the French Grammarians. We are obliged to adhere to the text.

[*f*] In the text ablutions in this tank are described as possessing great efficacy. Certain rites and observances are enjoined, which we think unnecessary to specify here. This thirtham, which at present we are told looks a dirty pond, is oval-shaped. The tree rumoured by traditon to be planted by Chandra, or the Moon, is said to be new decaying, only the trunk remains. We were not allowed to see it, as its site is considered sacred ground.

(*g*) The *vilvam* is a sacred tree [*Cratœva religiosa*] The eight tanks beside Tank No. 1 described in this book derive their names from the trees on their banks. These were first planted by either rishis or gods preparatory to making penance under their shade. Each of these tanks has its guardian deity as well as it guardian rishi. Those who bathe in the tank in question are enjoined to bestow money as alms. The water of this tank can purge away guilt, though it be even that most heinous of all murders—the murder of a Brahmin. Brahma-athi it is called.

3. North-east again, is *Jembu-thirtham*(*h*) deep
Whence sinners Ranga's choicest blessings reap;
Here Isani of old a *yaga* made
T'escape the ban 'neath which the gods him laid;(*i*)
The tree that grows luxuriant on its bank
With th' sacred objects of the Isle shall rank.
4. Then South, *Aswastha-thirtham* (*j*) lo! you see
Whose water men from lecherous sins sets free;
With painful penance on its bank so drear
Did anxious Indra seek himself to clear
From his vile sin 'gainst chaste Agalia fair (*k*)
That drove her saintly husband to despair!

(*h*) The *jembu* tree, we are told, is the *navval* or Calyptranthes caryophylliafolia.

(*i*) We are told that Brahma once directed Isani, said to be one of the regents of the cardinal and intermediate points of the compass, to fill the earth with delusion and to distract men's minds with Sivaite error. Isani carried out this direction, but was afterwards sorry for it; and, in order to expiate his offence, he made penance under the jembu tree that he had planted on the bank of the Pond is question.

(*j*) The *Aswastha* is said to be the *urasu* tree, the ficus religiosa.

(*k*) Agalia, the model of female chastity, was the wife of a great rishi named Gavutuma. The purana connected with Indra's violation of Agalia's chastiity is most indecent and puerile, and we refrain therefore from further particulars. Whether the invaluable tank in question is still used by the inhabitants of Srirangam or not, we are not in a position to ascertain

5. The *Punnai thirtham* (*l*) lies towards the west,
And on its bank did Agni whilom rest.
By penance he appeased the wrath of gods; (*m*)
Here alms bestowed shall meet with rare rewards.
Those in this sacred water who shall lave,
Should think of Ranga, and his power to save!

6. Northwest again, is Bakula-thirtham pure; (*n*)
Of his great sin remission to secure
Did Indra on its bank a penance make; (*o*)
All they who to its waters shall betake,
Bestowing alms in bounteous charity,
Shall be from mortal sins at once set free!

(*l*) The *punnai* tree has already been described in Book IX.

(*m*) Agni, the god of fire, was guilty of an *amour* with Svaha, the daughter of Daxa, who probably to excite his amorous passion, "assumed in succession the resemblance of the wives of six rishis." Hence Agni's penance. Such charitable gifts as ghee, cow and land are especially required of those who bathe in the tank in question; and at this tank crim. con. cases are easily adjusted.

(*n*) We have not been able to ascertain what the *Bakula* tree means; nor is the kadamba tree known.

(*o*) Indra's sin was the destruction of a demon named Virudar. He who gives alms and bathes in this tank is freed from even such sins as the murder of a woman or a cow.

7. Southwest Palasi-thirtham (*p*) calmly lies;
Hence all pollution, all destruction flies,
When sinners, e'er so vile, to Brahmins pure,
Present a cow, their blessings to secure!
8 Kadamba-thirtham at the north behold'
Upon its bank did Janaka (*q*) of old
A yaga make, and high distinction gain;
Here those who Brahmins feed shall grace obtain!
For Ranga by this thirtham e'er abides,
And in his navel four-faced Brahma hides.
E'en Brahmins who from sinners alms receive, (*r*)
These waters them from evil shall relieve!
9. North-east the Amerthirtham (*s*) last is seen;

(*p*) The *palasi*, we are told, is the puvrasu or porcher tree. Those who bathe in this tank are freed from the consequences of sins of lust.

(*q*) Janaka is said to be an ancient king. He is mentioned in Valmiki's epic poem, the Ramayana.

(*r*) It is believed that when a Brahmin receives alms from sinners, their sin are transferred to him. The water of the tank in question washes away this particular kind of guilt.

(*s*) The *amer* is the mango tree. The tank is otherwise known as *Suriya-pushkarani*. Except this tank and the tanks Santhira-pushkarani and Kadamba-thirtham, the other ponds seem hardly known even to the residents of Srirangam.

The gorgeous Surya, on its bank so green
A penance made blest Moksha to obtain;
Lands giv'n as gifts here for the donors gain
Rich blessings; all who in this water lave
From warth eternal shall e'en parents save.
On Ranga's Isle thus holiness e'er gleams
With brightest ray, its thirthams and its streams
Revere; to gods and guardian rishis there
To render heart-felt homage fit beware,
Thy ancestors these honors too shall share." (*t*)
The wondrous story told, upon those heights
The crowd celestial Ranga's praise recites!

(t) People who bathe in the sacred waters at Srirangam are enjoined to do *tharpanam* not only to gods and rishis, but also to their ancestors. The tharpanam appears, as a rite, to resemble very much the libation of the ancient Greeks and Romans; only that the latter poured *wine* on the ground in honor of some doity or ancestor, while the Hindus merely sprinkle *water*.

APPENDIX.

The great annual festival that is celebrated in Srirangam in the Tamil month of Margali (December-January) needs a separate corner. It is popularly called the *Voikonta Yejadesi* and involves a special Yekadesi observance, during which the several *avatars* or incarnations of Sri-Vishnu, associated with the destiny of Srirangam, are solemnized and commemorated.

This great festival runs a course of 20 days, during which processions of the Idol (Sri-Ranganada) are brought around the Temple for 10 days during day-time and is known as *Pagal-pathu*, and 10 days during night and is called *Ra-pathu*. We would be going out of the legitimate limits of our legend if we were to give an exhaustive description of each one of the avatars denoted by the Voikonta Yekadesi festival; but we may here give one event (called *Vedarpari*) as a specimen. It appears that in the early days of the Temple, funds were in requistion for either its construction or enlargement. Among other expedients that were resorted to one of the *Alwars*, or devotees of the god, adopted rapine and pillage as a means of filling the Temple coffers. The presiding deity was wroth with the *Alwar* for such conduct; and in order to catch him *in flagrante delicto*, he assumed the character of a wealthy traveller. No sooner the god

in this disguise appeared than the freebooter Alwar with his gang of outlaws attacked him and eased him of all the valuables the *soi-disant* traveller had with him at the time. Just then the god, throwing off his disguise, the Alwar recognized him and repented in dust & ashes being overwhelmed with fear. But the deity being struck with his devotion to the Temple and its interests immediately pardoned him and took him to Voikonta or paradise. This event is illustrated with scenic effect during one of the processions, a large number of people disporting themselves as *dramatis personæ*. The last day of the *pagal-pathu* is said to be the most important day, because being a Yekadesi or fast day it is the most meritorious of all the days; for on this day it is believed that "those who see the god, then passing through the Northern entrance of the second innermost enclosure, called the *Paramadavasal* which opens on this occasion, are sure of salvation." During the celebration of the festival pilgrims come to visit the Srirangam Shrine from all parts of India, & special & elaborate measures have to be employed by the S. I. Railway and the local Magistracy, Police, and Municipality for the security of life and property, and the maintenance of order and sanitation in Srirangam and its environs.

MAHAMAHOPADHYAYA